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MORAL TALES: 20

CONSISTING OF

THE RECONCILIATION,

A SKETCH OF THE BELVOIR FAMILY. A FAIRY TALE IN
THE MODERN STYLE.

CLEMENTIA AND MALITIA,

A FAIRY TALE IN THE ANCIENT STYLE.

CHARLES AND MARIA,

A NOVEL, FOUNDED ON FACT.

THE BEST HEART IN THE WORLD,

A NOVEL, THE OFFSPRING OF FANCY.

By JOSEPH MOSER, Esq.

AUTHOR OF THE TURKISH TALES, AND HERMIT
OF CAUCASUS, &c. &c.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.
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MORAL TALES

THE ASSOCIATION

CONTEMPORARY AND MODERN

THE ASSOCIATION

THE ASSOCIATION

MUSEUM
BRITANNICUM

BY JOSEPH MOORE, Esq.

AUTHOR OF THE THREE VOLUMES, AND
OF CROCHING, NO. 10

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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BELVOIR FAMILY, A FAIRY TALE IN THE
MODERN STILE.**

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A
FAIRY TALE,
IN THE MODERN STILE.

VOL. I.

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RECONCILIATION

A NOVEL

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE FATHER

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Vol. I.

PREFACE.

DR. JOHNSON has censured Shakespear for his violation of chronology in combining the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta, with the gothic mythology of the fairies, but, I think, without just ground; for, although the existence of those light-footed beings is certainly of gothic, or faracen original, the idea of the interference of supernatural agents, in the affairs of mortals, it is equally certain, is much older than even the story of Theseus and Hippolyta.

The poetical practice of using celestial or infernal machinery, to accelerate, or to retard the actions of mankind, to stimulate them to virtue or vice, to punish or reward, may be traced from Homer and Virgil, to Tasso, Milton, and their imitators; as may the notion

of supernatural and invisible agencies find support from Pythagoras, who is supposed to have received his instruction in Egypt: also from the works of most of the other philosophers and poets, and the opinions of the Magi and Gymnosophists, to which may be added, those of the Rabbinical Cábala.

Were I disposed to dive into the metaphysical pool, in search of Gnomes, to watch the rising of a Salamander from the flames, or mounting upon the wings of Zephyrus, pursue a Sylph through the air; the brotherhood of Rosicrucius, who rose to *illuminate* the dark ages, would still afford me their assistance.

We have already seen them extend their influence to modern times, and perhaps, even at this hour, some Gnomes may be endeavouring to

“Taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll;
Teach infant cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a beau.”

PREFACE.

If this be the case, I can only wish some *Aerial* may also extend her influence to guard the fair through the dangers to which such propensities may lead; at the same time I must observe, that attempting to call such a being into action, is a matter of too much consequence to be lightly undertaken.

Fully apprized of this, I resolved, very early in the story, to use extremely sparingly the agency with which I was entrusted, and not to apply to the Fairy, but upon extraordinary occasions; and even after this precaution, I fear it will be thought that she is introduced to as little purpose as this apology for her is written, and that it was ridiculous to make one the precursor to the other.

If that should be the general opinion, I have not much to say in the defence of either. The book which these few lines stand in the front of, has, as I before observed, derived little support from the crutch of the Fairy, neither

has its author attempted to lean upon the crutches of learning: in short, my aim has been amusement rather than erudition. I have not, with Locke, endeavoured to compound and disseminate ideas, nor with Lord Monboddo, to divide the human mind into four parts; the animal, the intellectual, the elemental, and the vegetable. I have considered these matters as too abstruse for myself or readers, and think more advantage may be derived from supposing the intellectual and corporeal powers closely connected, and that they are like the combinations of a republic, one and indivisible.

Considering them, therefore, as influencing each other, I have endeavoured to blend amusement with morality; and, without attempting to be too grave, to state the grievous effects arising from dereliction of principle, to lament the progress of dissipation, and shew its fatal consequences to the female form and
the

the female character: to hail the return of its votaries to virtue, and to the enjoyment of domestic life.

If in this attempt I have had recourse to extraordinary means, and called to my aid a supernatural being, I would not have my fair readers, however fastidious they may be, despise the medium till they have reflected, that one of the strongest incitements to virtue, is that just idea impressed upon the human mind, that our actions are known to a superior agent, and that we shall be rewarded or punished, as they tend to virtue or vice.

This thought may reconcile even those of more advanced years to the machinery of the tale, and may probably hinder my juvenile auditors from the commission of any *very great* trespass for fear, that like Adelaide, they should be betrayed by the fairy, Minionet.

the same thing: to find the reason of his
volition to virtue, and to the contrary of
conscience.

It is this attempt I have had to make in
conscience, and I call it to my mind as a
moral being. I would not have my life
ending in a failure. I may be de-
fied the medium of my knowledge. This
one of the most difficult matters to write is
that just described upon the human mind,
that our actions are known to a power, and
and that we shall be rewarded or punished, as
they tend to virtue or vice.

This thought may increase even those of
more wisdom, I refer to the uncertainty of the
end, and may possibly hinder my journey
towards the completion of my way, and
the desire to know the truth, they would
be betrayed by the very knowledge.

THE
RECONCILIATION,

A
FAIRY TALE.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

“ABSURD and ridiculous,” said Lady Adelaide, as she shut the book; “who can believe such nonsense? who can, even for a moment, give credit to writers that crowd their pages with the vagaries of those fantastic beings, whom poets and novelists have chosen to make the vehicles of their stories, or the agents and machinery of their incongruous romances?”

“Nor is it, my dear sister,” replied Lady Harriet, “absolutely necessary, that implicit credit should be given to them. If a poem, or romance, under the veil of fiction, conveys moral instruction, either of them may be as useful to the mind as deductions from matter of fact. In history we look for truth, in novels for entertainment; and if the page

be invigorated with sylphs, gnomes, fairies, or other aërial beings, I can see no objection to the use of them, provided that they be sparingly, and properly employed."

"This, my dear Harriet, is exactly what I expected from your invincible partiality to the romantic rodomontades of the Italian and Spanish dreamers; I knew you would take up arms in defence of those enormous folios, under which the shelves have heretofore groaned; more especially some, that, in language neither dull nor animated, describe actions and events, which are neither true nor false; such as are embodied in those delectable romances, the Grand Cyrus, Cleopatra, Cassandra, Don Belianis of Greece, Amadis de Gaul, Pharamond, and a thousand others, which our gallic neighbours have had a hand in the production of, though I think you pay little regard to some of *equal* merit, such as Guy Earl of Warwick, Dorastus and Faunia, Valentine and Orson, The Seven Wise Masters, St. George for England, Jack the Giant Killer, and many other excellent works of this description, which have no fault, but that of being the growth of our own country."

"I

"I pay respect," returned Lady Harriet, "to literary merit, in whatever shape I find it; and in no form that it assumes does it delight me more, than in that of fable and allegory."

"Now fable and allegory are," said Lady Adelaide, "what I detest: give me the language of the world; a picture of modern manners; a sketch of modern characters; a little personal *trait*; and now and then a short chapter out of the book of scandal."

"These," replied her sister, "are, to be sure, the materials that compose many volumes, whose entertainment is *equal* to the instruction they contain; works which, I must allow, at present eclipse and throw into the back ground those in which the mask of allegory, and the disguise of fable, are assumed to convey the dictates of truth, and the precepts of morality, more forcibly to the heart. Yet if you, my dear Adelaide, will give yourself time to reflect, it will recur to your mind, that the finest productions of genius, both ancient and modern, the most sublime ideas of the poets, and the best instructions of the philosophers, have been delivered under the

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disguise

disguise we have been speaking of. You know that allegory was formerly the mythological basis of religion; nay, you also know that the divine tenets of the christian faith were frequently delivered in the form of parables."

"A truce, my good Harriet," said Lady Adelaide, "to this abundance of wisdom; or if thou must give utterance to the solemn dictates of thy pure and unspotted mind, let it be in the presence of our chaplain. Dr. Lewis already regardeth thee as a maiden of uncommon sanctity. He will probably adopt thy sentiments, and, finding thy ideas coincide so entirely with his own, transfer them into his sermons, for the edification of our *intelligent* country neighbours. As for myself, not having understanding to penetrate the mysterious and mythological depths of subjects like those we have been discussing, I must recur to my first observation, and say, that the use of aerial or terrestrial machinery is at all times absurd and improper."

"Be it so," replied Lady Harriet, "I am by no means prepared to go to a greater length in defence of the system of Rosicrucius,

as I think the metaphysical effect of *fays*, *fairies*, *genii*, *elves* and *demons* would be lost in this age. The universal depravity of manners that prevails must be corrected by agents whose powers are superior. The vices of the times must be noticed in much plainer language than that of allegory; dissipation, if meant to be successfully ridiculed, must be more powerfully attacked than is possible in works where the lenient hand of the author attempts to convey his satire through the medium of a fiction."

"These," said Lady Adelaide, "are exactly the words of my father. He, who you know, is seldom disposed to allegorize, and generally speaks what may be called pretty plain English, has very lately lectured me upon giving a loose to the harmless gaiety of my disposition, and enjoying those amusements which my time of life require, and which the example of the whole *corps* of female nobility warrant."

"Why, I must say, my dear Adelaide," returned Harriet, "I think the Earl, our father, could scarcely speak too plain upon this subject; for though I am well acquainted with

with the purity of your mind, and the innocence of your heart, I am frequently led to wish, that you were less a slave to the frivolous fashions of the people by whom we are surrounded. The continual hurry, racket, and dissipation, in which you have for some time lived, are not only a waste of hours that might be employed to better purposes, but of health, spirits and constitution. I consider the situation of a young woman, as soon as the moderate restraint in which she has lived, under her governess, is removed; when she has been presented at court, and is consequently turned loose to pursue her own inclinations, as peculiarly dangerous. With the world, into which she has newly entered, before her, it is little to be wondered, that she is sensible of the force of its attractions. It is little to be wondered, among such a variety of smiling prospects, that she finds herself bewildered; and would perhaps lose her way, had not fashion prescribed a mentor, who undertakes to guide her, harmless, through the croud of perils, by which she is environed. You have, my Adelaide, a Lady of this description, and know best if her sage advice, which undoubtedly

edly is given, is always followed; if her counsels warn you to repel those dangerous assailants whom prudence should whisper us ****."

"Heavens! Harriet, what are you going to insinuate?" said Lady Adelaide, interrupting her, with her colour considerably heightened. "Indisposition, and your request, have, this evening, combined to pin me down to this dull mansion. I have not only to regret the sacrifice of half a dozen enchanting engagements, but the mortification of being obliged to listen to a lecture, which has not even the charms of novelty to recommend it, for I have positively heard it twenty times before from my father: however, although I am obliged to attend to his rhapsodies, that is by no means the case in this instance, therefore I shall leave you to the pleasing contemplation of your own prudence; and when you have made a proper comparison betwixt that and my levity, and taken to yourself all the credit which you think your superiority deserves, you may, at a future period, do what I shall do instantly, I mean retire for the night." Saying this she rung the bell with a force,

a force, which brought her servant with considerable alacrity, and, coldly wishing her sister good night, left the room greatly to the concern of Lady Harriet, who suffered extremely upon reflecting, that a word, which was rather intended for general than particular application, should have caused that perturbation of mind, which she had observed to mark the abrupt departure of Lady Adelaide.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE two young Ladies between whom the dialogue passed that was the subject of the preceding chapter, were the daughters of the Earl of Belvoir, a nobleman descended from one of the first families in the kingdom; but who had much greater claims to public estimation than those which he derived from a long illustrious line of ancestry, or splendid hereditary honours.

He was learned, humane, liberal and benevolent. A disappointment of the tenderest kind had long preyed upon his heart. From his connexion with Miss Amelia Gisborne he expected the greatest connubial happiness: he was deceived; neither his merit nor his attention had the power to restrain her within the bounds of prudence, or to make her what he desired, the friend and companion of a man, whose chief pleasures were domestic; and who, devoted to his studies, to the enjoyment of a small but elegant circle of friends, wished, but wished in vain, to live almost secluded from the metropolis. The opposition that he met
with

with in this his darling scheme, and the consequence of that opposition, had caused a considerable alteration in his temper, which, though originally chearful and gay, had taken a saturnine turn, by no means natural to it.

The indiscretion of Lady Belvoir had produced a separation betwixt her and the Earl, which took place, soon after the birth of Lady Adelaide. What ground there was for it is unknown, as he was too tender of her character to suffer any proofs of criminality, if proofs of criminality existed, to be adduced against her: he therefore contented himself with allowing her a moderate maintenance, which, as fame, however busy it had formerly been with her conduct, had not, since they had lived apart, brought any new charges against her, his generosity had induced him, almost annually, to increase; though he could not yet be persuaded to suffer her to see her children.

At the period of the commencement of this tale, Lady Harriet had attained the age of twenty, and Lady Adelaide was near nineteen. The slight *traits* of their dispositions, which the colloquy just recited has exhibited, will perhaps be more fully developed in the subsequent

sequent pages: here it will be sufficient for our purpose to observe, that to introduce them properly into the world, had drawn the Earl from his solitude, from the country, in which he delighted, and suspended his literary researches, in which he delighted still more.

This was the second winter of their appearance in town. Under the auspices of their aunt, Lady Whirl, a sister of the Earl's, some years younger than himself; they made their *debut* at court, and, starting from that centre, ran through a fashionable course of visits, plays, operas, balls, assemblies, and routs, more pleasing, perhaps, in the reality than the recital.

It would be unjust to these ladies, if we were to conceal from our readers that they were exquisitely beautiful, and cruel to the male part of them, to describe the symmetry of their elegant forms, the dazzling fairness of their complexions, the animated brilliancy of their eyes, the ornamental profusion of their hair, their lips, teeth, and a thousand other personal graces, with which they were adorned. Were we to give such a picture of them as at present strikes our imaginations,

we repeat, it would be cruel, as it might excite that abundant *sensibility* which distinguishes the youth of the present æra, and cause them to languish for ideal goddesses.

Waving, therefore, any further display of our graphic talents, we shall leave to fancy the portraits of our heroines, only assisting it occasionally with a few such slight touches as have already, and may in future appear; touches, which will just serve to bring to the masculine mind, the image of the loveliest female that ever nature, or art, impressed upon it.

Though, as has been observed, the young ladies made their *entrée* into the fashionable world at the same time, and began the pleasurable round together, that observation must be extended no further than to part of the first winter.

The gaieties of the town had a different effect upon the minds of the two sisters, for Lady Harriet had but just dipped in the stream, before she became disgusted, and receding from the brink, returned to her studies, to the rational pleasures she had enjoyed with her father and their domestic circle. While

Adelaide

Adelaide plunged into the vortex of dissipation, the consequence of which was, that in a short time the brilliancy forsook her eyes, the roses fled her cheeks, the animated tone of her health was relaxed: gaiety resigned its place to languor: the morning, which included the whole of the day, was scarcely sufficient to repair the devastations of the preceding evening, which included the whole of the night. Her appearance in the course of the winter was so much altered for the worse, that the Earl, who had used all gentle means to check the torrent, was now resolved, in spite of his sister, Lady Whirl, and several other ladies, who insisted that his daughter's beauty was ten times more interesting, fascinating, and fashionable than before, to withdraw her from pleasures, which he saw, by the avidity with which she pursued them, must end in debility both of mind and body.

But although his lordship discerned what was proper as soon as any man, and formed resolutions which did equal credit to his paternal anxiety, and his paternal tenderness, as suddenly: he was, from an habitual reluctance to exertions, equally slow in carrying

ing them into effect. His first idea was an immediate retreat into the country : but this Lady Harriet, who feared so strong a medicine might be attended with worse consequences than the disease it was intended to cure, opposed : she had the greatest affection for her sister, and rather wished, by gentle means, to detach her from the connexions of Lady Whirl, and win her to return to her former studies and habits of life, by shewing her the folly of her present pursuits, and their inefficacy to bestow happiness : but alas ! she had had a power to oppose, stronger than even the attachment of Lady Adelaide to dissipation ; stronger than her inclination to imitate the gaiety of her aunt ; stronger than any other predominance of the female mind ; indeed, so strong, that there was great reason to fear that she would have yielded to its influence, and have been totally lost to fame, to family and fortune. Whether or not such a melancholy fate befel her, will appear in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

LADY Harriet, among many elegant propensities, entertained a passion for flowers; she often had contemplated them as the most beautiful of all the various offspring of nature. In the country, she not only cultivated those which her green-house and parterres produced, but frequently explored the fields in search of the wild, though not less vivid progeny of Flora; nor were the natives of this climate her only care, for by her skill in horticulture, she dispensed "air, and sun, and shower" to several numerous and thriving generations of glowing and ornamental exotics.

In town, the two windows of her study were filled by most elegant stands, adorned with a large collection of the most beautiful children of the spring; these she watched with the anxiety of a parent, marked their diurnal progress, their opening buds, their rising graces, and all the variety and variegation of shapes and tints with which their blossoms were dyed, and leaves diversified.

These

These she frequently transferred to paper; the sides of the room her lovely hand had decorated with the portraits of the glowing favourites of the hour; portraits, which she contemplated with pleasure, as she had, by the means of this elegant art, an opportunity of immortalizing charms which she had often lamented were so fleeting and transitory.

Of all the plants in her collection her peculiar favourite was the *minionet*; she admired the softened tint of its green, the variety of its forms as its tendrils spread around, the beauty of its blossoms, and, more than all, the exquisite fragrance of its perfume. To do particular honour to a large assemblage of this beautiful exotic, which was in the highest state of cultivation, she had placed it in the centre of her stand, and suffered its ramifications to spread spontaneously over the elegant body of a vase, which was painted in imitation of the finest ware of Etruria.

As the lovely Harriet was one day pruning the plant and binding its tendrils, so as to make them form the most graceful ornament, she thought she heard a low whisper; she started with surprise, and looked around the
room;

room; she saw that she was quite alone, and from that circumstance began to think that it was some illusion of the mind.

Resolved to shake off her timidity, she again returned to the stand; again she resumed her employment. She looked at a rose bush, trained the stalks of a jessamine to their supporters, and spread the leaves of several carnations upon paper; she then examined the powdery bloom of her auriculas through a glass, and at length returned to the *minionet*. As soon as she began to move its leaves, she thought that she again heard the whispers. Although not quite so much alarmed as at first, she retired a few paces back, and looked around with the most scrutinizing caution.

In this situation, the little ground that there was for her fear recurred to her mind, and struck with the reflection, she smiled at her own weakness.

Once more approaching the vase, she stretched out her hand toward the plant, when she distinctly heard the soft but shrill accents of a female voice exclaim—"Lovely and beloved Harriet!" exceedingly alarmed, she was precipitately retreating, when the voice repeated—

“ Stop ! lovely and beloved Harriet !” Trembling, pale, and scarce able to support herself, she cast her eyes first towards the door, and then to the vase, when she observed a small figure rise from among its leaves. She would now in earnest have flown out of the room, but that the figure arrested her steps, by crying—“ Stop ! lovely and beloved Harriet !” Breathless, trembling, and faint, she stopped a few minutes before she had the power again to turn her eyes towards the vase ; when she did, she discovered, standing in the middle of the *minionet*, a figure of about eighteen inches high, dressed in a gown which appeared to be of grey silk, with a ruff and high-crowned hat ; she held a crutch stick in her hand, which she pointed towards Lady Harriet, while she said—“ I do not at all wonder at the agitation of your mind, oh lovely and beloved Harriet ! from my sudden appearance : the alarm is natural ; but I hope it will subside, when I assure you that you have nothing to fear, and inform you that I am your guardian Sylph or Fairy. I have from your infancy hovered around you, though I must confess, that in the nursery,

fery, and even to the time that the power of your governess ceased, I bestowed my favours equally upon Adelaide and yourself. It was my pride, my pleasure, to be the protectress of two pupils, who were as good as they were beautiful. But alas! when your sister, regardless of my admonitions, which I conveyed through the medium of her father, plunged deeper and deeper into the stream of dissipation; I left her in disgust, and at that moment almost formed a resolution to abandon her for ever."

"I am glad," said Lady Harriet, trembling exceedingly, "to hear that you did not *quite* form the resolution of withdrawing your protection from my sister; for though she has great flexibility of disposition, which suffers her to be guided and hurried away by those whose understandings are inferior to her own; though she has rather too much vivacity, and is frequently too ardent in the pursuit of pleasure, yet you know far better than myself the goodness of her heart, and the delicate tenderness of her temper."

"I used to think," said the fairy, "that I understood her character; I used to think
C 2 that

that I could discern the tear of sensibility tremble in her eye, and that the susceptible emotions of her heart were like those of your own, my dear Harriet, guided by good sense, and active in the cause of benevolence; but, I must confess, I have, in a great degree, retracted that opinion of her, and the pain this retraction gives me, is the cause of my personal visit to you. More than a month of the season of gaiety yet remains, and I know that affairs will detain your father in town, even beyond that period. Adelaide, although her health is considerably impaired, is preparing, with increased avidity, to run her pleasurable round; let me, therefore, before I entirely abandon, make one more effort to reclaim her! Advice can never come with greater effect than from your lovely lips; you can, at the same time, act as a monitor and an example—apprize her of the hazard she runs, inform her of my displeasure; if she listens to you, it will be well; if she does not, I tremble at the idea of the mischiefs that may ensue. I have purposely forbore to mention her lovers; when I think of her excentricity in that respect, I can scarcely keep my temper, therefore

therefore they shall be the subjects of our next conversation. Adieu! lovely and beloved Harriet; cherish the virtuous principles of your pure and uncontaminated heart, endeavour to work a reformation in those of your sister, and rely upon it that I will soon pay you a second visit."

While the Fairy was saying these words, she was gradually sinking into the vase; and as the last sound struck the ears of Harriet, the high crown of her hat, and the crutch head of her cane, which she held up, were only discernible to her eyes, which she kept intently fixed upon the vase, until the branches of the *minionet* closed, and totally excluded the fantastic vision from mortal sight.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

AFTER the departure of the fairy, Lady Harriet stood some time trembling, lost in thought, doubting whether she owed her present emotion to reality or to fiction. She would have considered the supernatural appearance which had so much alarmed her, as an illusion of the mind, had not the figure, and more, the words which she had heard, taken strong hold of her imagination, from the coincidence of the latter with her own ideas. When her perturbation had a little subsided, she looked at her watch, and summoning her maid, inquired if Lady Adelaide was stirring? The servant answered in the negative. Lady Harriet looked again at her watch, and seeing that it was twelve o'clock, began to be alarmed for the health of her sister; not that twelve, or even later, was an unusual hour for her to rise, but then it was after she had spent the preceding evening abroad, and had not perhaps retired till
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five or six. The case was now different; indisposition, and the representations of her father and herself, had kept the fair Adelaide at home the preceding evening, and she had, rather out of temper, withdrawn before eleven.

Lady Harriet therefore went directly to her, and was admitted by her maid, who was pouring the tea while her ladyship was reading in bed.

"My dear Adelaide will excuse my intrusion," she said, "when she is informed it is occasioned by my anxiety for her health; as I feared, from the lateness of the hour, that illness had kept you from the breakfast table, where my father inquired for you."

"Lateness of the hour!" said Lady Adelaide, "sure, my dear sister, your brain is turned; I have not been seen so early as this, above twice, since we have been in town. My father inquired for me! very likely he did; but sure he could not be so unreasonable as to expect that I should rise before day to attend him at his twilight *dejeune*."

"Before day, Adelaide! what at ten o'clock? you have been used to be ready at nine, nay eight, in the country."

“Such things have been to be sure, my dear antideluvian sister, but they will never happen again; as to the country, I detest the very name of it; it is the region of dulness—the cavern of Trophonius; I can compare it to nothing, which seems to suit it so exactly, as staying at home an evening in town and dreaming over fairy tales, which your gravity had selected for my amusement.”

“I think,” said Lady Harriet, smiling, “you might have been even worse employed.”

“Impossible! however, to make me some amends for lost time, if you look upon my *secrétaire*, you will see that the goddess of pleasure has not been idle during my secession from her court: you will see that I have a thousand engagements. Lady Whirl writes to condole with me upon my languor and want of spirits, which she, I believe, justly attributes to the still life I have led for the last twenty-four hours; so she has commenced physician and prescribed a ball. Lady Fidget, who was called in to a consultation upon my case, is of the same opinion: I am to rattle and dance away my megrims at her house to-morrow evening, and as a preparatory course,

we have to night a large party to the Opera, take our coffee in the new subscription room at eleven; after that, look in at Lady Hoyle's, but as her apartments will be immensely crowded, are only to stay one rubber; from thence to the Countess of Carmine's, just to see the different groupes that adorn her *suite*; then to the Duchess D'Ortolan's, where we sup at two, and as I mean to take great care of myself against the ball, Lady Whirl has promised that I shall be at home by four."

"By four!" said Lady Harriet, "bless me what an effort! But pray in this fashionable tour, do you expect such brilliant conversation, that you think it necessary to prepare for it by study? I observed that you were reading when I entered the room."

"So I was, my dear Harriet, but as I detest reading, you have come most opportunely to take the trouble off my hands. What book do you think this is which I am poring over?"

"Nay, that it is impossible to guess!"

"So it is; therefore I'll inform you this is a volume of the Antiquities of Greece."

"The Antiquities of Greece!" said Lady Harriet, in great amazement, "for what purpose, my dear sister, can you be studying the Antiquities of Greece?"

"For the only purpose," returned Lady Adelaide, "to which they can be usefully applied: I recollected that when I murdered an evening at Lady Belvidere's *conversations*, Dr. Torso observed, that the present *a la grec* taste in dress was no more like the true Athenian or Spartan, than the Venus de Medicis to Queen Elizabeth, in Mrs. Salmon's wax-work. He said that the ladies of the present age were loaded with drapery; that their dress wanted that transparent flexibility of folding, that elegant adhesion to the figure which discovered the limbs to such advantage in the ancient statues, quoted some lines from Homer and Virgil which I did not understand, and concluded with a reference to this book for a compleat description. Now I have looked the volume half over, and can find nothing to suit my purpose; but as I mean to have a dress made up in the true Grecian stile, and figure in it at the Opera, I must intreat you sister to continue the search."

"However

"However laudable your intention may be," said Lady Harriet, "I fear it will be attended with a little inconvenience."

"Bless me! what?"

"That you may subject yourself to the observation of the pit, and if nothing more serious should ensue, may be, at least, taken for an actress or a dancer."

"Delightful!" returned Lady Adelaide, "I should like that of all things. Such a mistake would be the talk of the whole town. I should hear my name buzzed around every fashionable circle, and acquire the appellation of theatrical goddess, opera nymph, or some such distinguishing epithet."

"And would that," said Lady Harriet, "be desirable! my dear sister."

"Certainly! the most desirable thing in life. It would be enough to bring a girl with half my attractions into fashion, and set her at the top of the *ton* in an instant."

"As this is a mode of becoming eminent," said Lady Harriet, "which I neither understand nor approve, let us drop the subject, for the present, and take up another, which I have very much at heart. You remember

the conversation that passed between us last night upon the subject of fairies?"

"I do!" replied Lady Adelaide, "and although it was the dullest conversation I have been engaged in since I have been in town, it had not the effect of contributing to my repose; for it has pursued me through the night, and haunted me in my dreams, in the shape of a little old woman in a high crowned hat, with a crutch stick in her hand, who wished me to sacrifice all my brilliant prospects, all the gaieties of life, at the altar of ennui: to abandon my acquaintance, give up my Lady Whirl; and retiring to our old family mansion, shut myself up in some recess, where no sound can reach my ears, save the melancholy tolling of the distant bell, and the striking of the turret clock, which indeed might warn me at every rotation of the minute hand, to thank heaven that another hour of my insipid life was elapsed. There condemned to watch with petulant anxiety over my books or embroidery till the summons to dinner called me to change the scene from silence and solitude, to the crowded table and *pleasing* conversation of the neighbouring frumps, the half animal squires, their wonder-
ing

ing daughters, and the parson, who, dull as the clock I have mentioned, is continually vibrating betwixt piety and politics."

"You seem," said Lady Harriet, "to express yourself very respectfully of your father's friends, and our amiable neighbours in the country, and yet believe me, my dear sister! to them, if you wish for peace of mind, health and happiness, you must return: nay, I will go further, and assert, that if you wish to merit the esteem of the world, or the approbation of your own heart, it is the neighbouring frumps, as you call them, that you must imitate."

"I imitate them," said Lady Adelaide: "frightful! what a tramontane idea! who, my dear sister, could have put that absurdity into your head?"

"Not to keep you in suspense," replied Lady Harriet, "it was put into my head by the fairy, who appeared to you in a dream, and visited me while I was awake."

"The fairy," said Adelaide, laughing immoderately. "The fairy! I shall convulse myself with my risibility. Visited you when you was awake! you may depend upon it,
my

my dear romantic girl, you are mistaken: you was as fast asleep as my dormouse; nay, I believe, though your eyes are now open, your senses are shut, and you are dreaming at this instant. The fairy! ha! ha! ha! I shall die with laughing; I must ring for Chignon to bring the Sal-poignant, eau de luce, lavender, or some other volatile, that as Dr. Narcotic says, may by means of the olfactory nerves, find admission to the brain, and enable it, in consequence of sternutatory exertions, to throw off that kind of—ha! hum! you understand me?"

"Indeed, sister, I do not."

"Another proof that you are fast asleep," said Lady Adelaide, with great vivacity; "had you been awake, Harriet, you must have been struck with my imitation of the doctor. I'll jump out of bed in an instant, and go through the whole scene betwixt him and my father, the last time the Earl had the gout. First" * *

"I must stop you, my too lively sister," said Lady Harriet, interrupting her, "and whether you chuse to consider me as waking or sleeping; whether I become a subject of your mirth, or a butt for your ridicule:

I must

I must again inform you that I have, this morning, seen your guardian fairy; laugh if you please, her admonition has seriously affected me: as she commanded me to warn you to retreat from the flowery paths, in which you seem so disposed to wander. Let me, therefore, my dear Adelaide, caution you to beware how you suffer your gay and ardent mind to be fascinated by appearances. Too often a serpent lurks beneath the grass. Your situation, and more, your time of life, require pleasures, but let those pleasures be circumscribed within the pale of rationality; let them be such as your father can approve, your sister can partake, and you will derive that satisfaction in your amusements, which always results from obeying the calls of duty and the dictates of affection. You will find, as I before observed, peace of mind, health, and happiness. On the contrary, if you pursue the course into which our aunt, who thinks joy consists in hurry, pleasure in racket and expence, has initiated you, the result will be the increase of that languor which so frequently oppresses you; the destruction of your health and beauty; the anger of an indulgent father, and

and the sorrow of a sister, who retires in tears, occasioned by observing that you pay so little regard to her admonitions."

When Lady Harriet left the room, Adelaide said, "Make my compliments to the fairy!" and began a laugh, which was repeated, at intervals, all the time she was dressing; and had so animated her countenance, that when she entered the eating parlour, the Earl and company complimented her upon her restoration to health. This risible propensity was increased by remarking the solemnity that seemed to cloud the brow of her sister, who assumed a double portion of gloom when she asked her if she had had another interview with the fairy.

Just as the desert was set upon the table, the carriage of Lady Whirl drove to the door: her ladyship could not stay a moment, she only came, she said, "to fly away with the fair Adelaide, whose spirits she feared would suffer a stagnation from staying so long at home." This the ready Adelaide acquiesced in, and immediately attended her to commence that round of gaiety which she had described in the morning: while Lady Harriet,

riety, as soon as she was disengaged from the company, retired to her chamber to contemplate upon events, which though but just hinted in a former chapter, had made a considerable impression upon her mind, and which must now, as we have an opportunity, be more fully developed.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

LADY BELVOIR, as has been mentioned, had, for many years, lived in a state of separation from her lord. Too much of the gay disposition of her daughter Adelaide, she had, soon after marriage, plunged into every species of fashionable dissipation.

Lord Belvior, even when he was at Oxford, was remarkable for a seriousness of temper, and an attention to his studies, very uncommon among the young nobility at that university.

Although, by the death of his father, he, very early in life, became possessed of a noble fortune, and master of his own actions, it but little influenced the steadiness of his principles: though affluence opened every door to pleasure, he was too prudent to enter at any, but that which belonged to the mansion of rationality. Though his friends and contemporaries ridiculed his gravity, he still remained fixed.

They

They laughed at, piqued, and lampooned him, but without success; till at last, finding that they could make no impression upon him, they gave him up, as a queer fellow, who was resolved to pursue the absurd course which his tutor, Mr. Lewis, had pointed out to him, who by his pedantry, his fondness for books, his religion, and morality, seemed an unsociable being admirably adapted to his pupil.

It will hardly be thought, considering the then time of life of Lord Belvoir, that he was destitute of amusements: he had many, but they were such as age would have approved and reason warranted.

One, among the rest, of which he was particularly fond, was, what at the university is called, *Steeple Hunting*, which all our college readers know, is riding out of the direct road, through lanes, over fields, hedges and ditches, guided only by the general knowledge of the country, and now and then, the accidental sight of

“A village crown’d with little spire.”

It was upon an excursion of this kind that Lord Belvoir, attended only by his groom, set out one summer’s morning soon after the sun had arisen.

He

He took the road to Woodstock, which he followed till he arrived at that town, and then pursued his rout toward Kidlington, where he struck across the fields, and over ploughed ground, heath, and common, continued his course, without seeing any other objects, than such as the romantic views of the country presented. A solitary mansion, a distant farm, a remote cluster of cottages, or a still more remote glimpse of a village steeple, until the heat of the sun, now arrived at its meridian height, began so much to incommode him, that he wished to seek for a place of shelter. He spoke to the groom, and they surveyed the prospect around. To the left, a thick grove seemed to promise a defence from the solar beam. His Lordship spurred his horse toward it, but soon discovered that a rivulet intercepted his passage.

As the stream seemed an easy leap for his steed he put him to it, but as it happened to be much wider than he had judged, the animal's fore-feet only touched the opposite bank, when he fell backward, and threw his rider into the middle of the water, and what was worse, by his

his side striking against the concealed stump of a tree he received considerable hurt.

The groom who had taken the brook somewhat higher, at a place where it was fordable, got over without any great difficulty, and seeing the situation of his master, plunged into the stream to assist him, at the same time he called aloud for help. A clergyman who was walking in the adjacent grove, hearing his cries, flew to the relief of his Lordship, and summoning several people who were at work in a field contiguous to the spot, by their exertions he was soon extricated, but as he had fainted, they conveyed him to the parsonage house, which was near, where he was put to bed, and proper means used for his recovery.

Nor was the servant neglected, who had exposed his life to save that of his master from the danger which threatened it: but as he had only suffered from the wet, when he had changed his clothes and taken some refreshment he was perfectly well, and able to answer the inquiries of Dr. Gisborne and his Lady, by informing them, that their hospitable attention was bestowed upon that very amiable
nobleman

nobleman the Earl of Belvoir, a name which the Doctor had frequently heard.

It will be supposed that the care of the worthy clergyman and his wife, was unremitting, during the few days which the medical gentleman, who was called in, thought it necessary that his Lordship should be confined to his bed. When he was sufficiently recovered to come down stairs, the Doctor introduced his daughter to him, and at the first glance, his fall and subsequent illness vanished from his mind.

Amelia Gilborne, at that period, in her eighteenth year, had passed the greatest part of her life in the secluded situation in which she now resided.

She had indeed, been at Worcester, at Gloucester, and Oxford, but never at London. Her father and mother, although, the most indulgent of parents, had one peculiarity: they were of opinion, that the entrance of a young woman into the world, could scarcely be too long protracted, and in consequence of that opinion, had refused to part with their darling Amelia, to the pressing invitations of their relations; who had frequently urged them to let her visit
the

the capital, which it would be folly to deny, that she had a violent inclination to see.

Her beauty was such, that, notwithstanding the Doctor in his own mind made considerable allowance for the partial observation of a parent, he was still convinced from the effect it had upon the male beholders, that they were of opinion, that she had an uncommon share of charms; nor had any pains or expence been spared either in her personal accomplishments or the cultivation of her mind: she also possessed a large portion of those external graces, which, nurtured in solitude, are too frequently lost by mingling with, what is called, the fashionable world. After this sketch, which we intend only to convey to the reader's imagination a faint outline of her charms, it is not much to be wondered that his Lordship, who had hitherto thought more of Helen than of any modern fair, should be struck when he beheld this lovely model, which he considered as a *chef-d'œuvre* from the hand of nature: in short, it is not to be wondered, that when she approached him, he should look at her with eyes in which the strongest approbation, if not passion, was painted. The tremulous accents
of

of her voice, when she congratulated him upon his recovery, he could for ever have listened to; but his confusion was such that he could not lead the conversation, which must have dropped, had not the Doctor and Mrs. Gisborne, who ascribed his hesitation to weakness, took upon them to continue it, by speaking of the beauties of the surrounding country, and describing the neighbourhood, which, they said, was distinguished for its elegance and sociability.

While they were thus engaged, the post brought the Oxford paper, and as his Lordship was eager to learn some news from the place of his residence, it was put into his hands, when the first article that struck his eyes was the following paragraph.

“The Earl of B*****r, a young nobleman, *remarkable* for his attention to his studies, set out upon an excursion on Thursday morning last, and has not since been heard of!!! His tutor, Mr. L*****s is inconsolable. Messengers have been sent to every part of the country, and, even to the metropolis, in search of him. As his Lordship’s *penchant* is *books*, some say he is gone about

about collecting, with a view to the furnishing his library: others, who know that he was a great admirer of the beauties of nature, think, that like Jove, he has *descended* to a cottage, in order to view her without disguise; and a third set, who have observed his Lordship's gravity, say, that having received a random shot, from the eyes of an Oxford Venus, his heart felt a wound, which his diffidence would not suffer his tongue to discover, and that, in all probability, it will be found that he has taken a lover's leap into the Isis, and that his fall will render our river as famous as the promontory of *Leucate*, or the *Hellepont*, so celebrated in classic story." At any rate his absence causes much speculation: policies are opened in the coffee-houses, and the chance of his appearance, has been done at a discount, of from four to six !!!

Although his Lordship, at first glance, comprehended the meaning of this paragraph, it was not till he had read it three or four times, that he felt in its full force, the effect his absence must have had, the concern it must have given to his friends, and the affliction it must have produced in the mind of his

tutor, Mr. Lewis. To that gentleman he immediately wrote, and in his letter stated the accident that had detained him. The consequence of his epistle was, that, next day, the tutor appeared, and was received with the greatest affection by his Lordship, to whom he communicated the anxiety that his absence had caused, and the methods which he had taken to discover him.

Dr. Gilborne who slightly knew Mr. Lewis, shewed, upon a nearer acquaintance, that he considered him as a valuable addition to their society. In this delightful retreat, our young nobleman tasted all those joys, which his poetic imagination had so often pictured to his mind, and while the mornings were devoted to visits, rides, or the elegant pursuits of literature; the evenings assembled the neighbourhood, and brought with them agreeable parties, concerts, and balls, in which the lovely Amelia shone with unrivalled graces, and the glances that shot from her eyes, every hour added fuel to the flame which her charms had kindled in the bosom of the impassioned Peer.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

AS Lord Belvoir, and the lovely Amelia Gisborne, were united above twenty years before this tale commenced, it would be nugatory to trace the steps minutely which led to an event, which, we believe, was sincerely desired by all parties. His lordship thought, that in the possession of a young Lady so beautiful, so adorned with every feminine grace, every elegant accomplishment, the most unbounded wish of his heart would be gratified. Her parents, although at first fascinated with the splendour of the alliance, soon found that their daughter's happiness was fixed upon a much more solid foundation; that the amiable manners, the virtue and benevolence which marked the character of their noble son-in-law, were much more valuable appendages than any that rank or title could bestow.

To the fair Amelia, who, secluded from the gay world, had "blushed unseen" by any, but a few neighbours, a coronet seemed a magic circle, within whose verge was contained every species of bliss; every joy which her enthusiastic imagination had heretofore brought to her view; which her ardent bosom had panted to become the possessor of.

"A girl of eighteen, almost a recluse," she said to herself, "thus suddenly transformed into a Countess! Good Heaven, is it possible? What state, distinction, splendour, pleasure, await the happy Amelia!

"A husband that adores me! that lives, but in my sight! A fortune almost unbounded; jewels, dress, equipage, servants, all the gaieties, all the luxuries of life spread before me! Sure my brain will turn! I shall feel an intoxication from this flood of joy and happiness."

Unfortunate Amelia, thy words were prophetic!

Disagreeable would be the task to follow thee through the fashionable vicissitudes of thy life; through the labyrinth of dissipation,
in

in the mazes of which each diurnal, or nocturnal rotation saw thee entangled!

The passion of the Earl for his lovely bride, induced him to indulge her to the height. Her appearance at court excited universal admiration; and, it must be confessed, that the admiration she excited would, had that been possible, have encreased his happiness. Wherever the Countess of Belvoir appeared she was hailed as the deity of the circle; her beauty was the theme of every tongue, and her dress considered as the perfection of taste and elegance. Her superb carriage, magnificent liveries, the brilliancy of her jewels, and the grandeur of every other appendage by which she was surrounded, were the envy of her fashionable cotemporaries.

Her acquaintance, of which the relations of the Earl formed the centre, extended far and wide, and was continually increasing.

The Countess of Belvoir's routs were by far the most crowded; her entertainments by far the most splendid of any that the circles of *le haut ton* displayed. How they were attended will be easily guessed, if we, for a moment, reflect upon the forcible attraction of novelty to

the gay world; who, led by the whim of the hour, are ready to applaud every new character that enters upon the scene. Her ladyship was a new character; and, as she was happily the possessor of beauty and genius, was animated in conversation, and unlimited in her expences, it is little to be wondered that she should become the *rage*.

Lord Belyoir saw his house continually filled with company: he saw his Lady immersed in every species of fashionable dissipation: he saw that it was not upon his account they assembled, as his gravity and retired habits of life were sneered at by his guests, and ridiculed by his Lady, who frequently left him to the full enjoyment of them. He saw all this, and much more which he could not approve; but as he considered Amelia like a bird just escaped from a cage, fluttering with unsteady pinions, and flying she scarce knew whither, he saw it without much regret. He knew her understanding to be of the first class, and had the highest opinion of her principles, which he also knew had been confirmed by the precepts of her father, and had acquired additional stability by an education, which
made

made her acquainted with the best authors, religious, moral, and philosophical: he therefore found himself inclined to give way to the torrent of gaiety which at present rushed upon them, because he thought, when it became more calm, and flowed in a more regular stream, the Countess, after sailing a few months upon it, would be satiated with the sameness of the prospects around, and look forward, with eagerness, to that period, which would change the scene for the country, where he had laid a plan of domestic happiness, which he had no doubt the approaching summer would realize.

Pleased with this idea, his lordship waited, with some impatience, till the wished-for period should arrive. Not so her Ladyship; intoxicated with her situation, charmed with every gay object which the goddess of fashion hourly presented to her view, when she thought at all of her removal she considered it with a kind of terror, and dreaded the time which would consign her to the dulness of the family mansion, which she judged to be the antitype of the parsonage house, a place in which she had passed years of existence rather

than life : for this reason she protracted their departure, until, from the desertion of the town, she was in danger of encountering that *ennui* which she so much wished to avoid. While they were in earnest preparation for their removal she was seized with a slight illness; the tenderness of his Lordship magnified it into a cause of the utmost alarm : he scarce left her room a moment; had a consultation of physicians, and took such methods to repel the first invasion of the disease, that the foe, thinking the host prepared to attack him were greatly above his match, made a precipitate retreat, after plundering her Ladyship of the few roses that remained unsacrificed at the shrine of pleasure.

The paleness of his once blooming Amelia now alarmed his Lordship, almost as much as her illness had done. He resolved, as the first consultation had been attended with such beneficial consequences to the patient, to call another. At this meeting it was agreed on all hands, that the Lady, although considerably recovered, was not perfectly restored to health; some secret enemy was lurking in the
consti-

constitution, which time, assisted by gentle alteratives, alone could combat.

Dr. Aquamarine gave it as his opinion, that *sea air, sea water, and sea bathing*, were essential to finish the work which they had so successfully begun.

This was at length assented to by the whole conclave: the Doctor was going to Brighton, therefore the Earl consented to take the same journey, and gladly took this opportunity to retain a person so well acquainted with his wife's system.

Brighton, at the time the lovely convalescent arrived there, was just emerging into notice; it had just begun to be celebrated for that pleasure and gaiety, of which it has since been the emporium; and the appearance of the Earl and Countess of Belvoir greatly contributed to bring it forward. The latter, who, as Dr. Aquamarine had augured, soon recovered her health and spirits, found that, although she had changed the scene from London to the country, the difference was merely ideal, as she had attracted the same company, was surrounded with the same

amusements, and in the same fashionable circle as in town.

The Earl, when his fears for her health had subsided, was under apprehensions lest dissipation should become habitual. He ardently wished to revisit his family mansion, and carry his domestic scheme into execution, but this the Doctor, who dreaded a relapse, forbid: he, therefore, was obliged to submit for the present, and when the birds of passage, who made a tour of the watering places, began to emigrate, consent to a plan laid by his Lady, in concert with the learned physician, who, from the state of her nerves, deemed another change of air necessary to the firm establishment of her health.

When the Earl of Belvoir found himself at Scarborough, with Dr. Aquamarine in his *suite*, he almost wondered by what magic he could have been induced to undertake the journey, especially when he reflected how much he wanted to be in the West, and the distance between the place of his present residence and Somersetshire. However, as Scarborough was rather thin of company, and my Lady consequently more domestic, he
became

became in a few days reconciled to his situation, while the hourly improvement of her health made him perfectly happy.

It was in some of these moments of felicity that he ventured, in the tenderest manner, to hint to her, how much her health and his happiness depended upon her attachment to a domestic life: he painted the mansion of his ancestors in the most beautiful and glowing colours; the lawn rising with a gentle acclivity, spangled with plantations bordered with flowers and odoriferous shrubs; the house, of elegant Græcian architecture, the whiteness of whose materials were strikingly contrasted with the varied tints of a wood in the background.

The rocks on one side, and the river on the other, were strongly marked; and the beauties of the surrounding country, the pleasing intermixture of hill and dale, wood-land and plain, the elegance of the neighbourhood, and salubrity of the air, described in language that spoke an almost enthusiastic attachment to the place of his nativity. When he had thus given his fair auditor his ideas of a situation which she had it in her power to render a

terrestrial elysium, he changed the subject to the description of the rational pleasures they might enjoy, the good they might do, and the consequence to the district which the residence of such a family was of; how far its influence extended; what opportunities would offer for the exercise of hospitality, liberality and benevolence.

Whether the florid and descriptive harangue of his Lordship had any effect upon the Countess is uncertain. She only, in answer to it observed, that however she might be struck with the charms of the country, which he had so well depicted, her situation precluded her from the enjoyment of them, as besides her aversion to so long a journey at so advanced a period of the season, she was determined to return to London, in order to prepare for an event, that would demand, what she could only there expect to find, the best assistance. To this no husband could object. His Lordship, with a sigh, gave up all further thought of his Somersetshire excursion.

When they left Scarborough they devoted the remainder of the autumn to visits, which they began at York, and continued to the vicinity

vicinity of the metropolis. Soon after they were settled in their town residence, Lady Belvoir presented to the family a young Lady, who has already been introduced to the reader by the appellation of Harriet.

When the Countess was perfectly recovered, his Lordship congratulated himself upon an event which had added to his happiness in more respects than one: as he had the most lively hope that the novelty and tenderness of the maternal character would entirely domesticate his Amelia: but alas! his hope was vain! she returned to the field of pleasure with the same, or rather increased avidity for the enjoyment of it. What at first was accidental, became habitual: she plunged deeper into the ocean of dissipation. False friends and flatterers, led her on from one folly to another, gaming to an excess crowned the whole, and the indulgent husband, though with reluctance, was, at last, convinced, that there remained but one means of saving her honour, and his fortune, from destruction.

Though his Lordship had been slow in resolving, the necessity of the case, he was convinced, required celerity in the execution. He

gave

gave her but a few hours notice of his intention, before, in spite of tears, intreaties, and all the artillery of female blandishments, he hurried her into the country.

As the journey was taken so much in opposition to the inclination of her Ladyship, and at a time when she thought that her inclination ought to have been a law, his Lordship, during the progress of it, could discern but few *traits* of that good humour which he had so often admired; she seemed to have left her vivacity in the metropolis, and to be influenced by a disposition, which in a person of less elevated rank would have been stiled *pouting*. This agreeable frame of mind continued long after they arrived at the mansion, nor could any of the amusements which the fond husband procured, restore to her lovely countenance those smiles and graces, which he thought its greatest ornament. The domestic scheme of life, was one of the first sacrifices he found himself compelled to make; for so attached was her Ladyship to the pleasures of the capital, that she resolved to introduce as many of them as possible, into the country; and when a beautiful woman takes such a resolution,

solution, it is easy for her to find abettors, and instigators, who will use all means to confirm her in it.

The Earl had made one effort in which he was determined to persist; that of being absent from London, till the course of a few years should have tamed the exuberant spirits of his Lady.

Satisfied with this, he suffered his house to be continually crowded with company, and silently acquiesced in the unmeaning gaieties of a place which he had hoped would have proved the mansion of domestic peace, and connubial happiness: indeed, he thought he had one more chance for the reclaiming his Amelia; the second month of her confinement was approaching, he flattered himself it would be a season of reflection, and that an increasing family would attract her attention, and turn her thoughts into a more rational channel.

The time of confinement came, but alas! it elapsed without being attended with any of those beneficial effects to her Ladyship, with which the sanguine temper of the Earl had led him to flatter himself. The addition of
Lady

Lady Adelaide to the house of Belvoir, instead of adding another knot to the matrimonial ligature, seemed to have been a signal for the Countess to fly away from the pleasing duties of a mother, and abandon a house, which, in her opinion, was become unbearable, from the squalling of brats and the impertinence of nurses.

It has just been observed, that whether it be in town or country, when a fine woman is determined to give the reins to her passions, she is always sure of finding companions to encourage, and persons, whose examples will serve to excuse her to herself: This was the case of the unfortunate Amelia. The busy whispers of officious friends, and would-be confidants, which had long circulated around the neighbourhood, at length, through the medium of the latter, reached the ears of his Lordship, who being of opinion that "Cesar's wife should not only be chaste, but unsuspected," flew to her chamber, and informed her of what he had heard. The answer which he received from Lady Belvoir, was ill calculated to cool the resentment which glowed in his bosom; in fact, it added keenness to his reproaches,

proaches, and those reproaches produced replies, which inflamed the passions of either party to such a pitch of indignation, that, from that instant, they determined upon a separation. There are frequently, in family disputes, agents and go-betweens, who interest themselves on each side, either from a wish to indulge an idle curiosity, or a love of mischief; such officious persons were not wanting in the present case, who fearing that if the principals had time, they might cool, and a reconciliation take place, took care therefore not to leave them until articles of separation were executed; a short period after which the lovely, the admired, the adored Amelia, Countess of Belvoir, became, once more, the inhabitant of the parsonage house, which in her gayer moments she had frequently compared to the Catacombs, or the temple of Harpocrates.

If we view the fair recluse in this retreat, we shall be apt to wonder at the perversity of that beautiful part of human nature, the softer sex, as it is certain that under her parental roof, she made that reformation in her mind, and passed her time in a manner, which had she adopted a few months sooner, would
not

not only have prevented the separation which had taken place, but have completed the happiness of his Lordship.

After the decease of her parents, she still continued in her country retirement, totally forgotten by the gay world, who, satisfied with the knowledge of so much of her history as comprised the marriage of the parson's lovely daughter to the Earl of Belvoir, his indulgence, her unbounded extravagance, her imprudence, and their consequent separation, gave themselves little trouble about the subsequent conduct of a person, whom, they all seemed to agree, was deservedly consigned to oblivion; and therefore paid no further attention to the *denouement* of the story.

More than seventeen years she had lived in this situation: for though his Lordship's resentment had considerably subsided, and he was pleased to hear of the reformation which her misfortunes had effected, he had not yet chosen to express his approbation of her conduct in any other way than that which has already been stated, namely, the sending her occasional presents, and increasing her stipend; and now that he observed so much of her mother's.

ther's passion for pleasure to predominate in the mind of her daughter Adelaide, it recalled to his memory the recollection of half obliterated events, and filled his bosom with the most poignant grief; at the same time that it determined him to use his utmost endeavours to ward off the evils that might ensue, by withdrawing the object of his anxiety from the vortex of dissipation.

Although at the time of separation, we young to have any idea of her mother, she had often contemplated her portrait, and in every way possible, with a respectful kind of delight. She had procured a miniature copy of that which was esteemed the greatest resemblance, and it was constantly before her. In her father's collection she had a copy of the original, and it was constantly before her.

The morning after the separation, she had that pleasurable countenance, which she had never before seen, and which she had never before seen. The first of the day, she had that pleasurable countenance, which she had never before seen, and which she had never before seen.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

SUCH as we have represented was the situation of Lord and Lady Belvoir; a situation which frequently caused a pang in the bosoms of their daughters, particularly in that of Lady Harriet.

Although at the time of separation, too young to have any idea of her mother, she had often contemplated her portrait, both in town and country, with a respectful kind of delight. She had procured a miniature copy of that which was esteemed the greatest resemblance, and it was constantly suspended near her heart; in her hours of seclusion she frequently wept over it, and addressed it as if speaking to the original.

The morning after the gay Adelaide had ran that pleasurable course, to which the reader will recollect she set out under the conduct of Lady Whirl, as Lady Harriet was tending her favorite *minionet*, the fairy appeared.

peared. Slow she arose, and seeing the picture, which as she stooped hung from her bosom and rested upon the side of the vase, she pointed to it with her cane, and thus addressed the trembling fair:—

“ You have, I see, oh lovely and beloved Harriet ! been weeping over this resemblance of your unfortunate mother. I know that her situation was not only the subject of your cogitations when you was alone last night, but that it has for a long time exercised your thoughts ; these symptoms of duty, to a parent neglected by the world, are very pleasing to me. I know that your mother burns with as ardent a desire to embrace her children, as that which pervades your bosom to receive her maternal blessing. Perhaps the hour is not far distant in which you may meet ! In the mean time, let me inform you, that I bestowed upon her the epithet of unfortunate, because I consider her as really so ; because I consider her as a martyr to indulgence, to flattery and dissipation.”

“ You will be pleased to hear, that, notwithstanding the disadvantageous reports which have been circulated against her, she was no further criminal. Your father is
con-

convinced, by the confession of the person concerned, that the story upon which his jealousy was founded was a mere fabrication; and from that conviction, aided by the exemplary life she has since led, I hope a valuable woman will be soon restored to her family. Of her no more at present, as to save her offspring from the snares by which she is surrounded, is my business here. You have not seen Lady Adelaide this morning?"

"It is not yet her hour," said Lady Harriet, "even if she had come home, in what she calls good time; but that was not the case, for I understand that Lady Whirl did not set her down till long after sun-rise this morning."

"I know it," said the fairy, "and, indeed, the gay and thoughtless Adelaide was so charmed with the party, at the Duchesse d'Ortolan's, that she would have been happy if the visit had lasted till after that luminary had declined in the evening. Have you ever heard her mention any particular attachment?"

"Never seriously! When she has described the different partners she has danced with at balls,

balls, or the various groupes in routs or assemblies, she has mentioned the Lord Viscount Spangle, and Captain O'Glitter, as dying for her, and humourously opposed their characters and appearance to that of another of her lovers, who is rather countenanced by my father; I mean Sir Paul Primitive."

"Then she never," said the fairy, "confessed a predilection in favour of any?"

"Never!"

"How will that conduct be reconciled to the opinion you have of her unreserved temper, when I inform you that she is upon the brink of ruin! that, fascinated by the flattery of Captain O'Glitter, and having no aversion to his person, she would, last night, have absolutely given him a promise from which she could not have receded, and have ventured into a situation the most dangerous that a young woman can be in; I mean that of meeting a man clandestinely, had I not caused Lady Whirl to lose a rubber, when the odds were two to one in her favour, which put her so much out of temper, that she threw up her cards and hurried her charge away."

"Good

"Good heavens!" said Lady Harriet, sinking into a chair; "is it possible? What must be the end of such an imprudent connexion?"

"Misery and ruin," replied the fairy: "the Captain, who is the younger brother of a family more remarkable for its antiquity than opulence, in the sister kingdom, set out early in life upon a continental tour, where he gathered every vice which the fertile climes he visited afforded, at the expence of his whole patrimony. He has, since his arrival in this metropolis, been considered as one of that numerous part of the fashionable world, of whom no one can tell by what means they live; who make their way into the most distinguished parties, and are continually buzzing around the upper circles of the *ton*, though how they procured their *entrée*, is perhaps as much an object of wonder, as how they exist. I know both; but as a disclosure of their infamous secrets would be of little use in the present case, I shall finish this visit by requesting you, oh lovely and beloved Harriet! you who have always pursued the paths of prudence

prudence and rectitude, to warn the incautious Adelaide.

“ Let not her love of pleasure, her love of flattery, nor even her love of Captain O’Glitter, plunge her into a situation which will not only bring sorrow and disgrace upon her family, but a ten times heavier punishment upon herself. It is not yet too late to recede; if she proceeds a step further the die is cast, and the beautiful Adelaide, with a form and understanding that might adorn the most elevated station, will become an outcast from society, and be undone for ever !” Saying these words, the fairy lifted up her crutch stick, the leaves of the minionet rustled and closed over her. Lady Harriet trembled as she vanished from her sight, and stood some time after she had disappeared, reflecting upon what she had said. When she had in some degree recovered her spirits, she looked at her watch, and observing that the day was far advanced, she sought the apartment of her sister.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

WHEN Lady Harriet entered the dressing-room of the fair Adelaide, she found her at her toilet, repeating—

“Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
“And calls forth all the wonders of her face.”

“Although, my dear sister, you are paying homage to the cosmetic powers,” said the former, advancing, “perhaps there is no one to whom their aid would be less necessary; nature has done so much, that art, like an awkward handmaid, is more likely to diminish than add to the graces with which you are adorned.”

“Bless me! my dear Harriet,” she replied, “sure this speech is warm from the lips of one of your numerous admirers, and pleased with the idea you are repeating it to me.”

“You know,” said Lady Harriet, “that my admirers, as you call them, are far from being

being numerous ; but few as they are, I should discard them if I thought there were any that could not express themselves better, as they are licenced to use the language of flattery ; and I make it a point of conscience to speak with sincerity to all, but more especially to my dear Adelaide !”

“ So do I !” she replied, “ sincerity is my darling virtue !”

“ I am overjoyed to hear you say so ;” returned Lady Harriet, “ as in the few questions I have to ask you, it will be necessary to tent that sincerity to the quick.”

“ Well then, begin your catechism as soon as you please ; you will find I have not forgot the responses. I suppose your first question will run in the usual form : What’s your name ?”

“ Ridiculous !” said Lady Harriet ; it is not your name that I am unacquainted with, my dear Adelaide, nor indeed that of a party to whom I wish gently to allude ; for although his person is a stranger to me, his character is not ; that, indeed, is pretty public.”

“ Good heaven !” said Lady Adelaide, in great confusion, “ what do you mean ?”

"My meaning," replied her sister, "is obvious. I fear you have formed a dangerous connexion, and I came to warn you against the ill consequences that may ensue from it."

"The ill consequences of a connexion with Captain O'Glitter! for it is him I must suppose you mean by your dark inuendoes," said Lady Adelaide; "can the casual meeting of a man of family and fortune, in the most elegant parties, be liable to any ill consequences?"

"The worst!" said Lady Harriet, "even had your meetings been casual; but as I know they were not, must I not suppose that my dear Adelaide has forgotten her boasted sincerity?"

"Not at all!" she replied, "I deem meetings casual, which occur at routs, balls, and other public assemblies; as, for instance, that which happened when I saw him at Lady Hoyle's. But, previous to my laying open my heart to you, my grave sister confessor, I must give you a sketch of yesterday evening; I shall do it with a few slight strokes and dashes, in the manner of Bunbury."

"I would much rather," said Lady Harriet, "see some finished pieces upon the subject

subject which I have given: let them run in a regular series like the *Marriage Alamode*. The first must be the introduction of Captain O'Glitter to the daughter of the Earl of Belvoir. The second will, perhaps, exhibit a ball-room: I shall see the Captain and my sister, all spirits and hilarity, lead up the jocund band of dancers: the third, I suppose, will shew him at your feet, pouring forth in hasty accents, for fear of interruption, the effusions of the sincerest of human hearts, and the dictates of a passion equally violent and immutable. I see you, with your face half averted, raise him from the ground: but here, I hope, the series will finish, for if the fair artist proceeds further, the subject must have a tragical termination. It must ———"

"Hold!" said Lady Adelaide, in the most violent emotion, "nor dare to breathe a single accent that indicates a suspicion of my having had any intercourse with the Captain, but such as any common acquaintance might claim, the forms of good breeding, the manners of polished society allow, and the most scrupulous virtue justify!"

“ If it be so,” said Lady Harriet, “ I shall gladly retract what you call my suspicion, nor shall I ever *dare*, by the least hint, to glance at the character of so *slight* an acquaintance as the Captain. You, who value yourself upon your sincerity, and consider it as your *darling virtue*, have said it, then why should I doubt? It must be so; but wherefore, my dear sister, this warmth? Why does your bosom heave, your features glow, and your whole frame seem disordered? Innocent as you are of any thing respecting the *Captain* but what any one might claim, what good breeding allows, and the most scrupulous virtue might justify, why does your whole system seem to rise up in arms to refute an accusation, which the internal monitor tells you has not the slightest foundation in fact?”

“ Because,” replied Lady Adelaide, panting with the violence of her emotions, “ such dark, such groveling insinuations have, in the minds of some persons, a foundation more permanent than even fact; I mean envy! Where that passion has taken root, it is scarcely to be eradicated; it is never to be convinced; it gathers strength from being opposed;

opposed; and calling its concomitant malice to its aid, like spiders they lurk in dark recesses, and are ready to prey upon all those who have the good fortune to be distinguished for mental qualities, or personal elegance: birth, fortune, rank, splendour, though adventitious advantages, are their constant food; slander their constant language: but in no case do the demons of discontent exert themselves more, than when a couple, equal in family, fortune and personal accomplishments, are contemplating to break the parental shackles; those fetters which tie the persons of daughters to old mansions, and dirty acres, and availing themselves of the right which God and nature gave, the right which every human creature has, or ought to have, of knowing best what will promote its own happiness: then the whole host of female malignants are alarmed! then the contaminating influence spreads far and wide; and in its baleful progress descends, perhaps, into the bosom of a sister, and induces her to listen to the fabricated tales of spies and informers! while eagerly grasping at these *morceaus* of slander, she as eagerly communicates them,

in order that disadvantageous comparisons may be made, and that she may vaunt her own superiority!"

"I have," said Lady Harriet, "listened with the greatest composure, my dear Adelaide, to your florid harangue; and the result of my observation upon it is, that if my suspicion, that you had been guilty of some impropriety of conduct, wanted a confirmation, you have afforded it a complete one. I shall not follow you through a speech, in which you have shewn more acuteness than sincerity, nor endeavour to refute positions which your own good sense will overturn, whensoever you chuse to give yourself time to reflect upon them. I shall take it for granted, that you do not mean to be tied to dirty acres, or antique family mansions, but intend to exercise that right which God and nature gave to reject parental authority, nor suffer yourself to be any longer guided by parental prudence; but with a man, whom you affirm you have only occasionally met, a man of whom you scarce know more than his name, enter into the most solemn and irrevocable engagement. It therefore becomes me, as your elder sister,

as being, by the peculiarly unfortunate circumstances of our situation, called upon to stand forth as the guardian of the honour of the house of Belvoir, to tell the younger daughter of that house, that she stands upon the brink of a dangerous precipice; that she has entered into a clandestine engagement with a man as void of principle as fortune!"

"A clandestine engagement!" said Lady Adelaide, trembling.

"A clandestine engagement! I repeat it," replied her sister: "and with a man equally a bankrupt in honour and estate. You may start, Adelaide; but you will do me the justice to believe that I shall not use the caustic of appealing to my father, till I find no effect from the lenitive measures I am about to adopt." "Observe this picture," she continued, taking the portrait of the Countess from her bosom, "you will here see a countenance beautiful as your own! you have proofs that the possessor of it had a mind superior to most of her sex: you are acquainted with her happiness, her talents, and her misfortunes: you know that the latter arose from an unbounded love of pleasure; and let me speak

it with tenderness and reverence, too little regard to the common forms of life, which you also know are the links that combine society; to these causes we may attribute her fall, aided, perhaps, by that envy and malignity which exists in the world, though not, as you would insinuate, in the bosom of a sister! As we, therefore, my dear Adelaide, are so circumstanced, it behoves us to be doubly cautious: we ought to place a particular guard over our actions, and not give the smallest opportunity to common fame to sport with our names, and revive reports, or make comparisons, which may prove injurious to our beloved mother, who, I hope, will soon be restored to her family; and in whose name, I adjure you to quit the dangerous, and, let me add, disgraceful connexion you have formed; to dismiss the captain from the train of your admirers, and, if you are weary of a state of celibacy, give encouragement to the man, who, to every other requisite, has to add the sanction of your father's approbation."

"Thus," said Adelaide, "ends the homily of my devout sister Harriet. I am little used to controverfy, or I would divide, and subdivide

divide it, as Dr. Lewis does his text, when he endeavours to convince us of truths of which no one ever doubted : but as I am not able to combat you in argument, I must bow to the authority of a sister, who founds her pre-eminence upon a circumstance that is by no means an object of my envy, being more than a year older than myself; and who, jealous of the honour of the house of Belvoir, and fearful that it should be contaminated by its youngest representative, has thought fit to threaten me with an appeal to my father : who has also, in a manner which does no great honour to her feelings, dragged from oblivion and obscurity the misfortunes of my mother, and placed them full in my view; and for what purpose? to induce me to forego the man of my choice, a man whom I know to be as eligible, in point of honour and fortune, as he is in that of family; and give my hand to that unfinished automaton, that walking vocabulary of the english language, Sir Paul Primitive! a creature not half so entertaining as a child's spelling-book. I declare, among the other passions which you have roused, that of jealousy is not the least active; you are so well acquainted

E. 6.

quainted with our affairs, that I have my suspicions that you having seen the Captain, and having become enamoured with him, as every woman must; wish by consigning me over to that figure who has a grammar for every thing he does, to secure a chance for obtaining him yourself."

"I have," said Lady Harriet, "often admired my dear Adelaide's talent for raillery, and sometimes, even when her wit has been exercised at my own expense; but I do not conceive a subject like the present, to be one of those that ought to be treated ludicrously. I sought this interview with the best intentions. I was impelled to it, not only by the sincerest motives of love and friendship, but by the commands of a superior being. My intelligence of your unfortunate attachment, did not arise as you conjectured, from such mean agents as spies or informers, but was communicated through a medium as infallible as extraordinary."

"Heavens! my dear romantic sister," replied Lady Adelaide, "what are you going to say? Sure you do not wish to persuade me, that like Belinda, in the Rape of the Lock,

I am

I am surrounded by Sylphs, Gnomes, Fays, and Fairies? If so, your caution was proper, just, and natural, although, as I am distractedly fond of the Poem, I had rather you had given it in the words of Pope:—

“This day, black omens threat the brightest fair,
That e’er deserv’d a watchful spirit’s care.
Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight,
But what, or where, the fates have wrapt in
night.

Whether the Nymph shall break Diana’s law;
Or, some frail china-jar receive a flaw:
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade;
Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade;
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball:
Or whether Heaven has doom’d that Shock
must fall.”

“You see that had you been inclined to quote, these elegant verses might have supplied you with a poetical warning; or had you been disposed to trust your own genius, there is something in the bellman’s, about taking care of fire and thieves, which you might have supposed to allude to those that are scorched by love, and plundered of their fortune, and have imitated them with success.”

“Prepared

"Prepared as I was," said Lady Harriet, "to encounter your petulance and vivacity, I have experienced both, in a far greater degree than I expected; I shall therefore take my leave, after repeating to you the warning of the Fairy."

"The Fairy," said Lady Adelaide, laughing, "The Fairy! Could any maiden on this side sixty, suffer herself to be so far the dupe of her imagination as to come on so ridiculous an errand? The Fairy! ha! ha! ha! my dear Glanville the second, you must excuse my laughing, but really it calls your good sense in question, to use so shallow an artifice to introduce a subject which you might have entered upon without such an absurd pretence; though, as perhaps you wish to edify the rising generation, the interview between Lady Harriet Belvoir and the fairy *Minionet*, might form a volume which might be read with delight, by the higher order of literary nurslings. To them therefore, in future, communicate your day dreams, but spare me, for Heaven's sake spare me the trouble of refuting such visionary nonsense."

"I shall,"

"I shall," said Lady Harriet, "satisfied, that although the attempt to warn you of the dangerous path you are pursuing has failed, it was my duty to make it. I shall now resort to stronger measures. It is not, Adelaide, the way to shew contrition for error, by encountering the person who detects it with the keenness of wit, and the sprightliness of vivacity: both these, though agreeable qualifications, must vanish before rectitude of mind, and openness of heart; with these I have opposed them, and these induces me once more to warn you against your dangerous connection, and to remind you, that if, forgetful of the precepts which your education ought to have inculcated, you give up your family, your honour, and your duty, in pursuit of the meteor of a passion, which shines but to lead you astray, it is a crime that will carry its punishment along with it."

"Excellently said, fairy Harriet!" exclaimed Adelaide, as her sister left the room; she then summoned her maid, and resumed the business of the toilet, which this dialogue had interrupted, and as this was the ball night, she

she spent a considerable time in arming at all points before dinner, soon after which, she expected Lady Whirl to conduct her to that scene of festivity:

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

WHILE the thoughtless Adelaide was preparing to make her *entrée* upon the field of hilarity, Lady Harriet sought the solitude of her own chamber, and there gave a loose to emotions of keen sensibility, which her fears for her sister had excited.

She revolved in her mind all that had passed at the late interview, and the idea that she not only avowed, but seemed to glory in her passion, increased her sorrow. "What can be done in this case?" she said to herself; "if I inform my father, he will, unquestionably, hurry the fair delinquent out of town, and by that means, for a time at least, break the connection; but will such a dissolution be permanent? Certainly not. I know too well the determined temper of Adelaide, to suppose it will be quelled by opposition: then her health may suffer in the contest, therefore let me rather continue to try the effect of persuasion."

suasion and blandishment; let me take the advice of our guardian Fairy, and pursue the measures that she shall dictate."

In consequence of this resolution she became more composed, and finding that she had two hours before it would be necessary to dress against dinner, she determined to dedicate them to a walk, and some occasional calls. As she passed along Bond-Street, she recollected that she wanted to give some orders, and stepped into the shop of a milliner who was employed both by her sister and herself. The *Marchand de Mode* ushered her into a back parlour, where a female attendant displayed the contents of several boxes, consisting of caps, ribbands, laces, and a variety of other articles of fashionable paraphernalia.

While she was admiring the taste displayed in some of the ornaments, hinting improvements that might be made in others, inquiring to whom such a part of dress belonged, and spreading laces upon pieces of silk, in order to see the fineness of the ground, and the beauty of the pattern, another lady entered the parlour,

Observing

Observing a most elegant and graceful figure approach, Lady Harriet arose, and offered her place; which the stranger politely declined; but seating herself by her, began to talk of the variety of fashionable articles before them. Pleased with her manner, struck with the tone of her voice, and her observations, which gave to the trifling subject they were upon a moral turn, the young Lady seemed to have found a person with whom she could be acquainted in an instant, and spread the contents of the boxes upon the table, with a view to engage her in further conversation. As she was thus employed, she frequently stooped forward, by which means the picture, which we have said she wore in her bosom, became suspended on the outside. When it first caught the eye of the Lady, it attracted her attention so much as to be observed by Lady Harriet, who blushed to find her looks rivetted upon her. At length the Lady said, "I fear I am guilty of impoliteness, without intending it: I have your pardon to ask for my particular attention; but your voice, your features, your manner, every moment become more interesting to me.

Permit

Permit me therefore, oh lovely young Lady! to inquire your name; and, if I may take the further liberty, whose portrait that is which hangs from your bosom?"

"Willingly," said Lady Harriet, "will I answer both questions; my name is Harriet Belvoir, eldest daughter to the Earl of that name and title; and this," handing the miniature to her, "is the portrait of my mother."

"The portrait of your mother! Good heavens! are you my daughter?" she said, and fainted in her arms.

The mistress of the shop and female attendants, who had, from motives of respect retired when the Ladies began their conversation, the shrieks of the younger soon brought to the assistance of her mother. Proper remedies were applied, and the Countess opened her eyes; but it was only while she repeated "my daughter!" and then again fainted.

At this period of confusion and distress, Lady Harriet heard the voice of her father, inquiring for her in the shop. She ran instinctively and drew the green silk curtain
over

over the glass door, just as the master informed her, that the Earl of Belvoir would attend her home, if she was at leisure.

“ Good heaven !” she exclaimed, “ what shall I do ? can I leave, in this situation, a mother to whom I have been hitherto precluded from shewing my affection ? Can I abruptly inform my father of her being here ? How shall I account for my confusion ? On every side I am environed with difficulties !”

Lady Harriet, reluctant as she was to quit the place till she recovered, was still more reluctant that the Earl should at that time see her ; she therefore thought of two evils, the former was the least, and recommending her strongly to the care of the females assembled, desired to be informed of the state of her health as soon as possible—mentioned a physician that in case of necessity she would have them send for ; she then threw her arms around the inanimate Countess, and the embrace exciting all her tenderness, she exclaimed—
“ Can I ! can I leave my dear mother ?”

The mistress of the shop, who had lifted up the curtain and observed the impatience of the Earl, with great deference begged of her
to

to compose herself, and by no means risk a discovery, from the shrieks and exclamations which would attend the revival of the Countess, which she asserted would be speedy. Thus comforted and admonished, the lovely trembler joined her father, who, it had been truly said, had almost exhausted his patience.

Whatever desire the Earl might have had to have given his daughter a gentle hint upon the subject of her delay, it fled before the surprise and concern which her heightened complexion, the derangement of her dress, and the confusion which prevailed in her deportment, excited. He inquired with the greatest eagerness and anxiety, what had produced this appearance. She was therefore obliged to confess the truth, though not the whole truth; she said her fright and tremor had arisen from the circumstance of a Lady's fainting, and her derangement from assisting her. When they came out of the shop, the Earl accounted for his appearance, by saying, that as he walked up Bond-street, he observed her footman at the door, and as upon inquiry he found that she had been long enough to purchase the most brilliant

brilliant birth-day paraphernalia, he determined to have the pleasure of gallanting her home.

When they entered the drawing-room, both the Earl and his daughter were a good deal surprised to find Sir Paul Primitive walking about in some emotion, and exclaiming—
“Madam, I am a *noun substantive*, and can support myself!”

“I am glad to hear it!” said Lady Adelaide, “for I declare I thought you meant to make an adjective of me, and have forced me to express some part of your *quality*.”

“Madam! madam!” said the Knight, “though I always bow with the greatest deference to the feminine gender, yet let me tell you, except in that respect, you are more like an adjective than you are aware; for although your variations are infinite, it is in degrees of comparison; as you are more beautiful, so are you more obdurate than the rest of your sex; and as to the number and case of your lovers, they are wholly indeclinable.”

“How, Sir!” said Lady Adelaide.

“I will explain,” returned the Knight.

“There is no necessity,” said the Earl, advancing, “as you seem to be engaged in
5 a gram-

a grammatical dispute, which can afford no amusement to any, except to the parties concerned."

"A grammatical dispute," retorted Lady Adelaide, "I declare, my Lord, if your Lordship had not asserted that you knew the Baronet, and all his family, I should have thought, from his manner and conversation, he had not only imposed upon you, but had forgot my sex. If you had heard the whole of our colloquy, as he calls it, it would have brought strongly to your mind, a schoolmaster chiding one of the junior boys."

"A schoolmaster, madam!" replied the Knight, "is not a character that I am disposed to speak very lightly of! but your Lordship shall judge if I have deserved the severe castigation which I have just received from this Lady. As I observed, when she entered the room, that her lovely face and elegant form had been assisted by every adventitious advantage that it was in the power of dress, jewels, and ornaments to confer; I considered it as by no means deviating from the rule of strict propriety, to assume the catechetical mode of opening the conversation, and in-
quire

quire what occasion had called forth this extraordinary display of splendour? The Lady answered me 'a ball.' Considering this as an opportunity not to be neglected, although my attention to abstruser studies has, in some degree, obliterated the lessons of my dancing-master; and indeed I never could bend my mind or my body, to more than just to obtain the first rudiments of that trifling art, I begged to have the honour of conducting her to the scene of festivity, and the supreme happiness of her hand, through the fantastic labyrinth of the dance. Now your Lordship will recollect that dancing, as described by Homer, was rather ****

Here the servant appeared at the door, and Lady Harriet said—"Although I have great curiosity to learn from a gentleman so well skilled in ancient customs as Sir Paul, a few traits of the domestic life, the balls and festive assemblies of the Greeks and Romans, I hope the company feel stronger sensations than even those of female curiosity; I mean those excited by appetite, because I understand that dinner is served."

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F

"Madam,"

HARRIET

"Madam," replied Sir Paul, as he handed her to the staircase, "since you honour the few rudiments I possess of the arcana of antiquity with your approbation, and are inclined to pardon the errors of a mind hitherto almost wholly confined to literary researches, I shall be happy to receive your commands; at the same time I must observe, that it is with great diffidence I shall give a lecture upon the domestic life of the ancients to one so much more capable, in that respect, to become my tutor."

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

WHEN the daughters of the Earl of Belvolr retired after dinner, the impatience of Lady Harriet to be made acquainted with the situation of the Countess, rendered her extremely anxious to hear of her, and that anxiety was much encreased by the superabundant gaiety of Adelaide, who, as she stood at the glass adjusting her jewels and ornaments, amused herself with laughing at the gravity of her sister, whom she declared to be exactly the counterpart of Sir Paul. She said they were formed for each other, and offered to resign, or rather to make a present of the Baronet to her. She then run over the morning conversation, which she placed in the most ridiculous point of view, and had so successfully employed her comic talents and imitative powers, in giving a picture of the formality of her lover during dinner, that she, more than once, excited a smile upon the

lovely countenance of her sister; but that smile was soon checked by Lady Harriet, when she reflected, that however shaded by peculiarities, his amiable character amongst those that knew him, must ever blunt the shafts of ridicule. She had therefore begun his defence, when Lady Whirl drove to the door, and carried off her impatient auditor to a scene of greater gaiety.

In a few minutes after the departure of Lady Adelaide, Lady Harriet received the following note:—

“ My dear dear Harriet,

“ How strong are my sensations! how inadequate is my power to describe them! what a meeting was ours! After a separation of seventeen years, heaven this day permitted me to embrace my daughter; but from that embrace, overcome by my emotion, I sunk to a state of insensibility. By the care and attention of Mrs. Barton, the milliner, and her family, I was recovered; but it was only to a sense of misery, for I considered what had passed between us as an illusion of the mind. Alas! during my long solitude I have had many! Frequently have I in idea beheld my lovely daughters,

daughters, such as they are, adorned with all those graces which nature, and all the polish which education can bestow. Oft have I held ideal conversations with them; and when I have stretched forth my arms to clasp them to my bosom, they have vanished from my sight.

“Such a phantom, I feared, I had this day seen; and although now convinced of the contrary, though I now recal to my mind your features, your voice, your look and action, I would make “assurance doubly sure,” and, once more, embrace the reality.

“Oh my lovely and beloved Harriet! what have I not suffered? Three years of thoughtless dissipation have been succeeded by seventeen of repentance! Banished from the arms of a fond, perhaps too fond, a husband! from my children, from my connubial home, from relations and friends, I have, since the death of my parents, stood alone in the world: “the martyr of imprudence.” But of that no more at present! The object of my journey to town presses upon my mind, that object was no other than to obtain a sight of you and your sister. I am an enemy to clandestine proceedings; but sure *a mother* * * *

—Oh my dear Harriet! and no less dear, though unknown, Adelaide: shall I see you, for a short time at the milliner's in Bond-street, to-morrow morning? Mrs. Barton has been so obliging as to offer her drawing-room, so that we shall not be subject to the smallest interruption. I think this indulgence the Earl would allow, but that I would not have him informed of my being so near at present. Believe me, my lovely daughters, the note that announces your desire to fly to my arms, will afford the greatest pleasure that has, during our unfortunate separation, been known
by your unhappy mother,

A. BELVOIR."

Anxious as Lady Harriet had been to hear from the Countess, the satisfaction which this letter gave her was mingled with concern, when she reflected upon the situation of the thoughtless Adelaide. She doubted whether, even if she was so disposed, she should have an opportunity to communicate the contents of it to her, as the amusements of the night would intrench so much upon the morning, that she would scarcely be visible before the
hour

hour of appointment arrived. Another circumstance demanded some attention: she had frequently lamented to her sister the unfortunate situation of their mother: and it was with regret she recollected, that she did not find in her that sympathetic sensibility with which her bosom was affected. If, even in the country, she could not find time to listen while her elder sister dwelt upon the woes of their parent; but either from constitutional gaiety, or dislike to the subject, had always chosen to change the discourse to one of greater vivacity; it was not likely that in London, surrounded as she was, with every thing that could allure and fascinate a youthful mind, the idea of being presented to a mother, whose fall was owing to a conduct, like that which she was so sedulously pursuing, would afford her much satisfaction. "Suppose, therefore," she said to herself, "I was to have a second interview with the Countess before I mentioned the circumstance of her being in town to Adelaide!" Here another difficulty occurred. If she went alone, her mother's inquiries must naturally lead to a discovery of the clandestine correspondence, in which her

sister was engaged with Captain O'Glitter: "Well! but," said she, after a moment's reflection: "what can I do better than to unbosom myself to her, and take her advice upon the subject? Great as the imprudence of Adelaide is, and much as the knowledge of it will hurt the Countess, it is still better to discover it to her than to my father; perhaps her experience and tenderness may suggest a method to withdraw her from the dangerous precipice on which she stands at present. Every moment shews me the propriety of the measure I am about to take, and strengthens my resolution to open my heart to my mother!"

When Lady Harriet visited her flowers and plants, in the morning, she was surprised to find, that while the greater part of them shone with that vivid lustre which the spring excited, and the solar beam displayed; her favorite *minionet* seemed to droop. Its tendrils no longer sported in wanton luxuriance round the sides of the vase, its blossoms no longer opened to catch the all-cheering rays of Phœbus: large drops of humid exhalation hung like tears upon its leaves, and

when

when she endeavoured to raise the stalks, they shrunk from her touch like those of the sensitive plant. While she hung over the vase with a look of concern, a soft sigh stole from her bosom, as she viewed this beautiful exotic, once the pride of her collection, now exhibiting marks that indicated a rapid decay: again she sighed, and at that instant heard the rustling sound; the leaves began to quiver, she started, and retiring a few paces back, beheld the fairy slowly rising in the midst of them.

While the lovely trembler stood gazing intently at the object, which every moment rendered more conspicuous, she could not help observing that there was a solemnity in the appearance of the fairy, which she had not remarked at her former visit. The benignant smile had vanished from her countenance, and she uttered a groan, before she thus addressed her:

"It is, oh lovely and beloved Harriet! to my peculiar favourites alone, to those whose actions are guided by prudence, whose words are dictated by modesty and truth, that I make my personal appearance; to those who are less in my good graces, I pay my nocturnal visits,

disturb their repose, form fantastic images in their minds, and cause all the wild chimeras of a disordered fancy, all the glowing ebullitions of a restless imagination to pervade their bosoms, and hover round their couches in the form of morning dreams. In this manner have I been haunting the incautious Adelaide, ever since she retired, which was not till six o'clock. I know you are preparing to deprecate my wrath; but upon that subject I must command you to be silent. I feel myself greatly irritated against her, nor will you, when I inform you of the transactions of last night, think that she deserves your interference."

Lady Harriet, abashed at the sternness of the fairy, seemed to shrink into herself; she trembled more violently than before; she leaned for support upon the tripod stand of her variegated jessamine, and hid her tears and blushes behind the leaves of that beautiful plant, which the fairy observing, proceeded in a milder tone.

"I meant not, oh lovely and beloved Harriet! to have excited your sensibility; forgive the earnestness with which I spoke, an earnest-

earnestness, which my zeal to promote the happiness, and my fears for the honour of your family, gave rise to.

“How have I lamented that that happiness, and that honour, should have been risked by the incautious conduct of the younger daughter of the Earl of Belvoir! Have been! did I say? I ought rather to have stated that her prudence, duty, all her future prospects, the happiness of her life, the honour of her family, are now suspended by a thread; they now depend upon that unstable basis, the passions of a headstrong girl, who has sacrificed even common sense upon the altar of flattery; and no longer ago than last night, deceived Lady Whirl, and had a private interview with Captain O’Glitter; a short one, it is true, yet long enough for them to interchange vows of eternal love and everlasting fidelity; and for her to consent—(I shudder while I repeat it)—for her to consent to elope with him this evening.”

“Good heaven!” said Lady Harriet, “is it possible? Elope! Oh Adelaide, hast thou so soon forgot all the precepts which our governess, my father, and Dr. Lewis have,

through a series of years, been almost daily inculcating?"

"Nothing is more certain," replied the fairy. "Fascinated with the external gaiety and apparent good humour of the Captain, your sister, in the prime of youth, and pride of beauty, artless, and hitherto innocent, fancies she has conceived a violent passion for a man that is continually telling her he lives but in her sight; a man who watches each word, look and action; and while he praises her beauty, by a flattery which flies more directly to the heart, adopts her sentiments, and even her words. To such a voluptuary as Captain O'Glitter, the person of so lovely a woman as Adelaide Belvoir, must render her a desirable object; yet her person is, to him, but a secondary consideration; her large independant fortune is absolutely necessary to retrieve his pecuniary affairs, at present in the most shattered condition, and the connexion of the noble family to which she is so nearly allied, to repair the disgrace which he has suffered from being cast off by his own. For these reasons he has been more than commonly assiduous; for these reasons

reasons he has practised all the arts of seduction, arts which have many times been successfully employed by him in a course of desultory gallantry; to this end he has called the powers of eloquence to his aid, and, in language glowing with passion, with an energy which comes from the head, and in which the heart has no concern, painted pangs which he never felt, and described his amorous sensations in words studied, and learned by rote, for the occasion!"

During the latter part of this speech Lady Harriet's agitation was so great, that, unable to support herself, she sunk upon the sofa, and, as if the delinquent, struggled with her emotions, till, her passions unable longer to endure the conflict, she must have fainted, had not a shower of tears come to her relief: she hid her face with her handkerchief, and exclaimed, "Alas, poor Adelaide! what will become of thee?"

"The victim of an unhappy passion!" said the fairy, "she will become a prey to a man who has not understanding enough to pay that regard to her mental endowments which they deserve, and who seeks nothing but the gratification of his sensuality and his avarice."

avarice. When he is satiated with her person, and in possession of her fortune, he will neglect the one and dissipate the other. Then, but, alas! too late, will the unhappy Adelaide, when she has found that her friends, and even the man to whom she has sacrificed rank, beauty, youth, family and fortune, has forsaken her; when she finds herself an outcast from society, and the obloquy with which the character of the Captain is shaded, attached to her own! then will the unhappy Adelaide repent; but, as I said before, repentance will then come too late!"

"Good Heaven!" said Lady Harriet, avert this severe denunciation!" At these words she dropped upon her knees, and continued: "I love Adelaide as my life! Deprived, from infancy, of the care, the attention, the tenderness of a mother, we have, from that circumstance, been drawn closer to each other. With what pleasure have I listened to the innocent, but animated effusions of her elegant mind! how have I delighted in the sprightliness and vivacity of her disposition! 'till, led away by the thoughtless dissipation of the times, betrayed by her passion.

passion for gaiety and splendour, we never knew what it was to suffer an hour's separation: and even now, although I grant she has been imprudent, I would stake my existence upon her virtue and honour! Shall I not, therefore, stretch forth my arm to save a sister from sinking into the gulf of misery? Shall I not, most benignant fairy! supplicate you also to avert the severe decree that you have pronounced, and restore to her family, indeed to herself, my lovely Adelaide!"

"Rise, oh lovely and beloved Harriet!" said the fairy; "I am pleased with the warmth with which you espouse the cause of the thoughtless Adelaide; and, as far as my power extends, be assured that I shall watch over her; but you must understand that that power is very limited. I am, as I informed you, her guardian sylph, or fairy, but it is only to guide her conduct in the inferior duties and offices of life. In the higher obligations, in the distinctions betwixt good and evil, virtue and vice, and their operations upon the mind, she must implore the aid of a power, far, far superior to mine. The Omnipotent hath, in every bosom, placed a monitor; and when she

"She has humbled herself before him, she must trust her conduct to his guidance; he will teach her to relinquish her present pursuits, and, if she is worthy of it, restore her to her family!"

"But, in the mean time," said Lady Harriet, "can nothing be done to avert the impending evil; to prevent her meeting with the Captain?"

"Whatever is done," replied the fairy, "must be speedily determined upon, as she has consented to elope this evening: the post-chaise is to wait in the Square, at a little distance from the house; and, as she has not even trusted her maid with the secret, she means, at ten o'clock, unattended, to leave her paternal roof, and put herself into the arms of a stranger. The time for deliberation, therefore, you see, is short!"

"It is, indeed," said Lady Harriet, sighing.

"I will fly and inform my father!"

"You had better," replied the fairy, "take the advice of your mother. I know the time that you have appointed to meet her is nearly arrived, and I have made my visit too long:—Adieu, therefore, oh lovely and beloved

beloved Harriet! may your exertions in favour of the unfortunate Adelaide be attended with success!"

At this period the vases and stand trembled, the leaves of the plants rustled, hoarse murmurs seemed to fill the room, the fairy sunk by degrees, and, in a few minutes, became impervious to the sight. Lady Harriet staid till her emotions had, in some degree, subsided, and then proceeded to Bond-street to fulfil her engagement with the Countess.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

BEFORE we follow Lady Harriet to her appointment with her mother, it will be necessary to peep into the bed-chamber of Lady Adelaide; for, notwithstanding our respect for the *ruelle* of a fair Lady, such was her indolence, that, although the clock had struck one, we must be obliged to undraw the curtain, if we mean to see the younger daughter of the Earl of Belvoir.

The room, about which and the toilet, jewels, feathers, gauzes, silks, ribbands, and every part of the paraphernalia of female dress was scattered, in gay confusion, exhibited too faithful a picture of the mind of its fair inhabitant. After a few hours of disturbed repose, in which the visions of the Captain courting her to his arms, and the fairy warning her to shun any connexion with him, had equally harassed her mind, she awoke, and in revolving the transactions of the preceding evening,

evening, the first idea that struck her was the imprudence of the consent she had given; she therefore determined to take the advice of the fairy, and revoke it. As the first step towards a reformation, she would unbosom herself to Lady Harriet. Her sister, of whose prudence and understanding she had the highest opinion, notwithstanding she had, in the moments of vivacity, ridiculed both, would, she knew, be pleased with this mark of her confidence; and point out to her the surest way to extricate herself from this disagreeable affair. Pleased with this idea she rung for her maid, and desired her to request the attendance of Lady Harriet for a few minutes, as she wished to take her advice upon a subject of particular importance. The servant retired, but soon returned to inform her Ladyship that her sister had, some time since, walked out, and was not expected home till near the hour of dinner.

"Bless me! how mortifying! I wonder where she can be gone so early!" said Lady Adelaide. "As I do not intend to rise yet, you may withdraw."

When she was alone, she began to think that, had Lady Harriet been at home, she
should

should have done a foolish thing to have explained her situation to her. "Why should I," she said, "wish to break off with the Captain? Is he not the same charming, elegant, entertaining creature I have ever known him? Has he been guilty of any crimes, except carrying on a clandestine correspondence, or urging me to a sudden elopement? can be called so? and even to these," she continued sighing, "I fear I have been the seducer. Can I blame him for pursuing the dictates of the most ardent passion that ever glowed in a human bosom? Certainly not! Then if I do not blame, why should I punish him? Good Heaven! what was I about to do? My word, my honour, is engaged to the Captain, and if I was to forfeit that engagement, who can tell what effect it might have upon him? Despair! perhaps distraction might be the consequence of my perfidy; and what excuse could I have, even to myself." "I dreamed a dream last night," ridiculous! "I was visited by a fairy, Queen Mab, perhaps!" "Still more absurd: No! it is impossible for me to break my faith with a man who so well deserves my esteem, my tenderest affection."

As,

As, notwithstanding the fair Adelaide changed and wavered several times while she was dressing, this was the point to which the index of her mind always reverted, we must consider the scheme of elopement as absolutely fixed, and follow Lady Harriet to the milliner's, in Bond-street, where, when she arrived, she found that the Countess had been some time waiting for her.

All the tenderness of the mother, and affection of the daughter, which had predominated at their former interview, revived; but as this was expected, it was not attended with those disagreeable consequences to the Countess.

When the warmth of her emotions, embraces, and tears, gave place to words, the first that she uttered was to inquire what reason had detained Lady Adelaide from the arms of a fond, and expecting mother. This inquiry naturally produced a reply, in the course of which, Lady Harriet, with all the tenderness the case would admit of, explained the situation of her sister, and indeed gave the history of their lives, "even from their girlish days," to the hour when they entered
into

into the world. The subsequent conduct of Adelaide, her love of flattery, her passion for pleasure and dissipation, and the consequences of those passions, which, she added, if not averted, must have a fatal termination.

Struck with the resemblance of the disposition of Adelaide to her own, at the beginning of the career of her matrimonial life, the Countess listened to her daughter with the most profound attention, and her emotions followed the fair reciter through every part of the interesting narrative. When it was concluded, she said, bursting into tears, "Unfortunate child, of an unfortunate mother! Surely I have suffered enough in my long banishment from society, let me hope that I shall not be subjected to the further punishment of seeing my indiscretion revived in thee!"

"To guard her from the misfortune alluded to, and you from the pangs it must occasion," said Lady Harriet, "was, my dear Madam, the purpose of my application to you. You would smile at your visionary girl, was I to tell you that I came to the knowledge of these transactions by supernatural means, and

and that our guardian fairy stimulated me to ask your advice."

"I am little disposed, my dear Harriet," replied the Countess, "to smile at present; and if I were, it would not be upon this occasion. I have passed my time through a long series of years in solitude, and, great part of it, entirely alone; if I could be said to be so when I have almost daily seemed to hold conversations with my departed parents, my dear children, my husband, and friends, that had forsaken me.

"I have in the gloomy twilight hour called ye all to my view; and so far have those images which ever-working fancy has conjured up, impressed my mind, that I can scarcely, at this moment, think them less than realities!"

"But, to return to my daughter; to prevent her meeting a fate, perhaps still harder than that which has attended her mother, what can be done?"

"That," said Lady Harriet, "is the subject upon which I wished to take your advice. Shall I inform my father?"

"By no means," replied the Countess, "at least, at present, as the measures his passion might dictate, might be attended with disagreeable

greeable consequences to himself: yet, how can such an affair be concealed from his knowledge, indeed from the knowledge of the town? Let me recollect a minute,—Suppose I was to step forward, and convey Adelaide to the place of my residence?"

"If that could be effected," said Lady Harriet.

"Had I a letter of the Captain's," she continued, "I would risk the chance of it however. I would assume the character of his relation, and also inform her that he has received an intimation that her family are not totally unacquainted with their intentions; but that to prevent suspicion from falling upon him, especially as his motions will probably be watched, he has entrusted his aunt, Mrs. O'Glitter, with the care of his bride elect, who will conduct her to a place of safety; that he shall remain a few hours after her in town, and will take such means to elude pursuit, that when he joins her they may proceed to the land of Hymen in perfect security."

"Heaven, that hath inspired your Ladyship with this scheme," returned Lady Harriet, "has furnished me with the means of forwarding the execution of it. I have a letter

ter of the Captain's, which the careless Adelaide drew out of her pocket with her fan, as I suppose, for I found it upon the carpet a few minutes after she set off with Lady Whirl to the ball. You will see that it will assist us in two points, that we shall not only be able to imitate the hand, which is a common one, but be furnished with some circumstances which, by being alluded to, will give the deception an air of compleat probability."

"I see at once," said the Countess, "the advantages that may be derived from this paper, and I take upon myself to make the most of them. With respect to the letter, writing has been so much my amusement, that neither the composition, nor imitation, will be matter of any difficulty. I shall also appoint the carriage, and intreat her attendance an hour sooner than the time proposed; all this will be easy, and I hope successful, but there is one real difficulty occurs."

"Heavens, Madam! how you alarm me!" said Lady Harriet, "What can it be?"

"It is, my dear Harriet," replied the Countess, "the opinion your father will form of this affair; what effect the elopement of

his daughter, even with her mother, may have upon him."

"Let it be my care," said the young lady, "to break the matter to the Earl, to soften the asperities of my sister's conduct, and to place this expedition in a light that may, I hope and trust, conduce to the future happiness of the whole family!"

"Heaven send that your words may prove prophetic!" returned the Countess; "we must now part, as the day wears apace: I shall instantly prepare for our journey. May it also prove a propitious one, and not only restore Adelaide to her duty and her reason, but me to that mansion from which I have so long been banished!" Saying this, she strained her daughter in her arms, and after a few minutes spent in mingling tears and embraces, they parted.

Adelaide was in the drawing-room when Lady Harriet returned. "I have not had the pleasure of seeing you, my dear sister," said the latter, "since the ball; I shall now expect, in your lively manner, an entertaining description of it."

"Then

"Then you will be disappointed," replied Adelaide, "a ball, when it is over, only serves to torment one; I should like to have it last a week."

"With an agreeable partner," said Lady Harriet;

"Certainly, with an agreeable partner," returned Lady Adelaide; "then the light-footed hours fly with the wings of zephyrs, and we are ready to quarrel with the sun beams for intruding upon our hilarity. Oh! charming, charming hours, how I regret that you have passed! I think the reflection upon any scene of festivity, only serves to produce vexation and mortification; yet what has been, may be again."

"Doubtless!" replied Lady Harriet, "though surely you might lengthen, and in some degree renew the pleasure, by describing the progress and effect of it upon your mind."

"I am of a different opinion," said Lady Adelaide, with quickness. "I think, as I observed before, the description of a ball, the dullest of all verbal amusement; and if I were inclined to place the preceding evening before your eyes, and display each character with a dash like the figures in the long minuet, the piece would be executed with so little spirit, that

you would turn in disgust from such a vile daubing, and condemn me as an execrable paintress."

"Something has ruffled you, my dear Adelaide," said Lady Harriet, taking her hand; "repose your sorrows in the bosom of your sister, and depend upon it if she cannot cure, she will endeavour to alleviate them."

"Sorrows! sure, my dear Harriet, your brain is turned; I have no sorrows." She continued wiping her eyes.

"I am glad to hear you say so! I did not mean to insinuate that you had any *real cause* of sorrow; but slight circumstances sometimes arouse the sensibility of an irritable mind; something I am sure has discomposed you: at the ball perhaps you had a disagreeable partner?"

"Quite the reverse!" said Adelaide, blushing.

"I am glad of it, because you will then inform me who the happy youth was that you honoured with your hand."

"Who my partner was!" she replied; "Lord bless me! I thought not only you, but half the town knew that I danced the whole evening with Captain O'Glitter."

"Captain

"Captain O'Glitter!" said Lady Harriet, "is, I think, also honoured with the approbation of Lady Whirl."

"Oh! she adores him;" said Lady Adelaide; "she thinks him the most lively entertaining creature."

"And her niece," returned Lady Harriet, "is nearly of the same opinion."

"Why, I cannot say, my dear Harriet, that I see, with total indifference, the merit of the Captain; at the same time,"—here she held up her handkerchief to her face—"at the same time a father's approbation. Oh, heavens! excuse me, my dear sister!" she continued, bursting into tears, "I know not what I was going to say—I can go no further."

"You must, indeed, my dear, dear Adelaide, go much further!"—At this instant the servant came to the door, and said, that the Earl had just returned, with Sir Paul Primitive, and that they were coming up stairs.

"Good God!" said Lady Adelaide, flying into the back drawing-room, "let me not be seen in this situation! make my excuses to my father; say I am fatigued—indisposed—

any thing! It will be impossible for me to come down to dinner."

Lady Harriet had but just time to assure her, that she would do every thing she desired, before the Earl, Sir Paul, and what was worse, some female visitors arrived: as the company was large, and Lady Harriet engaged great part of the evening, we shall leave her therefore to entertain her guests, and see how the hours were passed on the part of Adelaide.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

How the time that she was alone was passed by Lady Adelaide, it would perhaps, were we to attempt it, not be very easily minutely to describe; therefore we shall generally observe, that when she left her sister, the first reflection which struck her mind was, how near she had been to the making a disclosure of the grand secret of her heart.

She shuddered at the thought of what might have been the consequence of such a violation of fidelity to her lover; accused her sister of art, inasmuch as she had seized the moment when her mind was softened, when her spirits were agitated, and with insidious blandishments, attempted to wring from her, what not only her honour, but every chance for her future happiness, bound her to the concealment of. "Yet," she said to herself, after a minute's reflection, "how should she know I have any secret, any concealment?"

She turned this subject in her mind for some time, and the result was the acquittal of Lady Harriet of any sinister views in the conversation which had passed between them. "Perhaps," she said, with a sigh, "it may be the last." While she made this reflexion, tears streamed down her lovely cheeks.

Her maid, who attended with her dinner, seeing the disorder of her mistress, and rightly guessing that it proceeded from her agitated spirits, begged to be allowed to inform Lady Harriet; but she was peremptorily commanded to be silent upon the subject.

The dinner was taken away without the least diminution on the part of the fair flutterer; who, when alone, found she had all the conflict of the morning to endure again. She amused herself with weighing both sides of the question, in what she thought an impartial balance; but, as love unseen by her, threw a considerable weight into the Captain's scale, that consequently preponderated.

She had again determined upon an elopement, and was thinking how to get out unobserved by her family, when her servant entered the room.

"A letter

"A letter for your ladyship," she said, presenting it to her.

"A letter for me," she replied, trembling violently, and blushing when she cast her eye upon the well-known hand. "Does the servant wait for an answer?"

"When my Lord's gentleman gave it to me, he said no answer was required."

"Leave me to read it," said Lady Adelaide, whose agitation was so great that she could scarcely unseal the cover: but, great as her emotions were, they were increased when she had made herself mistress of the contents. There was something so singular in the Captain's desiring her to begin a journey with a Lady whom she had never seen, that she was tempted to believe the letter a forgery; yet, upon a closer examination, the hand was that of her lover's; and there were allusions to circumstances and conversations that had passed between them, that gave it an appearance of probability, which it was impossible to controvert.

The truth of the letter being thus established, she began to consider the contents in another point of view. She knew, that as

envy and malignity had been busy with their amour, it was not impossible but that some reports might have reached the ears of her father: if so, it was still more probable that he might have ordered some one to have an eye upon her lover.

When the human mind is disposed to credulity, every object takes the colour in which it is depicted by that organ. Lady Adelaide had got over two of the greatest difficulties with respect to the letter; it was therefore not likely that she should stumble at the third.

She had frequently heard the Captain mention his relation, Mrs. O'Glitter, and lament that he had not an opportunity of introducing her to that Lady. She had a firm reliance upon his honour, and thought, when she came to reconsider the matter, that there was a peculiar delicacy in his present conduct, so determined to elope, according to the plan he had laid, with her female protector.

While she was in this agitated state of mind the hours stole imperceptibly away. She heard the clock strike, and looking at her watch

watch perceived it was eight : her tremor increased as the time of appointment approached. She wished to see her sister : determined to inform her of her situation ; and had her hand upon the bell tassel, when she reflected on the folly of her conduct, and altered her opinion. She then began to make some little preparation for her journey ; but, as she opened the drawer, relapsed into her former state of irresolution ; and, throwing herself in the chair, burst into tears.

Probably the tears in some degree relieved her mind, for, in a few minutes, she became more composed, and, in earnest, set about preparing for her journey. As she had been all day in her riding-habit, no alteration of dress was necessary : and as she resolved to purchase wherever she came, she took nothing but what was contained in two large pockets, which she had procured for that purpose. It wanted but a few minutes of nine, when she summoned her maid, and said, “ she had occasion to speak with Lady Whirl ; and as it was but in the next street, and her business was particular, she would wish to get out, unseen by her sister, or any of the servants.”

The attendant said, "that might easily be effected, as the latter were all in the servant's hall, except the boy who opened the door in the absence of the porter."

"As I mean to surprise Lady Whirl, and, indeed, though I said particular business, have nothing in view but a harmless frolick, I shall go just as I am. You shall attend me to her door, if we can pass the hall unobserved."

"I will answer for that," said the maid; "but will not your Ladyship risk your health by walking? You was very unwell this morning."

"Talk not of health!" replied the Lady, "I am very well at present."

Whatever might have been the maid's opinion of the matter, as her business was silent acquiescence she attended the fair Adelaide down the back stairs, whose flutter was so great that she had more than once thought of giving up her enterprize in the moment of execution.

Fortune was propitious to her at the outset. Her spirits in some degree revived, when she found that she had quitted the house without being obstructed, or even seen; for the

the boy, who was placed to watch the door while the porter dined, either charmed by the caduces of mercury, or some impulse less poetical, was fast asleep in the great leathern chair. How did the heart of our heroine palpitate when she passed the carriage in her way to Lady Whirl's, at the door of whose house she dismissed the servant; and knocking, inquired if the Lady was at home, which she knew she was not. When she had stopped a few minutes to leave some trifling compliments, she returned toward the carriage; but, as she approached it, her feet trembled so, that she was obliged to support herself by the rails of an adjacent house. All the mischief that might ensue to her person from her imprudence; all the sorrow and disgrace with which she should load her family, flushed at once into her mind; and she would have fainted, had she not been upheld by some friendly arm. A female voice at the same time spoke the accents of consolation to her ear. "I think," she said, "I am not unacquainted with that sound; and, as far as I can distinguish your person, ——"

"You

"You are not unacquainted with either," the voice replied; "I knew your Ladyship an infant! I am Mrs. Barton the milliner; and as I had, from this Lady, some intimation of this expedition, I attended in the chaise till you passed, and have since watched your steps, to assure you that you may rely upon her as a person of the strictest honour; that you could not be safer in your father's house than under her protection; and that she will not leave you till she sees you placed in a situation at once honourable and happy."

"That the fair fugitive may depend upon," said the Countess, from the carriage; "I shall guard her as a fond mother would a darling child."

A ray of joy at this instant pervaded the mind of Adelaide; she knew the character of Mrs. Barton too well to have any further doubts; so stepping into the chaise without the least reluctance, they took leave of that Lady, and set off at a pace that seemed to promise a speedy termination of their journey.

Although the ebullition of her mind had been so great that she had not observed by which gate they had left the town, she soon found

found, by the motion of the carriage, that they were upon the road; when the Countess said, "as she meant to go a pretty long journey, she was fearful that travelling all night would be injurious to her health, therefore they would, if she chose it, rest at the second stage."

To this Lady Adelaide, who dreaded a pursuit, objected. She said "that travelling all night would be attended with no inconvenience to her; and that she found herself happy even in this moment of emotion, and, perhaps, imprudence, in the consolation she derived from having such a companion."

"And do you," said the Countess, putting her arm round her, "think yourself happy in my company? Oh, my dear child, I am sure I am supremely so in your's! You bring to my mind a daughter, that I lost when an infant, and who would now have been about your age! You bring to my mind all the years of maternal tenderness that I might have enjoyed! the happiness I might have felt in directing the principles, in watching the expanding ideas, and superintending the education of my lovely offspring!"

"And

“And you, madam,” said Adelaide, “impress my soul with the same sentiments. I feel in your presence sensations hitherto unknown; and short as our acquaintance has been, so much is my mind softened by my present situation, that I long to lay open my heart before you!”

“Do so,” said the Countess, embracing her; “from this instant let us have no reserve to each other! I shall, in a short time, make you acquainted with my history; in the meanwhile, unboresom yourself to me, in the certainty that my inquiry proceeds not from motives of idle curiosity, but from a sincere desire to guard your honour, and promote your happiness!”

While the Countess said this the carriage stopped at Hounslow; and, as she observed that her *protégée* seemed fatigued, she insisted upon her taking some refreshment, which indeed was necessary, as she had scarcely broke her fast the whole day. Tea, the only thing that she could be prevailed on to accept, was ordered. They alighted, and were, with much ceremony, ushered into a room, by the landlord, who made them fifty bows in the course

course of their ascending the stair-case; and who sent a landlady to them, that, equally polite, approached them with as many curtsies.

There were something in the accents of the Countess's voice, which had, while in the chaise, thrilled the heart of Lady Adelaide; and she had figured to herself, from the little she could discern of her person, a form the most pleasing. But all the ideas which her fancy had drawn, abashed at their inferiority, vanished at the first glance, which she had of the lovely original, as the landlord lighted them up stairs. When in the room she had a fuller view; she gazed upon her with a mixture of surprise, rapture, and veneration! she seemed to think she had often seen her before; yet such was the confusion that reigned in her mind, that she could not recollect where.

Nor was the Countess less struck with her lovely daughter, whom she left in the cradle, and found in the full bloom of beauty! She regarded her with equal attention; and saw her in features, form, height and complexion, exactly what she was at the same age!

As

As the sensations of these two Ladies were mutual, so was their silence. They stood some moments gazing; and then, rushing into each other's arms, burst into tears!

The whole soul of the Countess was possessed by her maternal feelings, and she was, more than once, upon the point of discovering herself; but she checked the desire she had to avow her consanguinity, as she hoped the time was not far distant when that avowal would have greater effect.

Lady Adelaide, in the pleasure she derived from the conversation of a Lady, whose person inspired her with so much respect, and whose manners and mode of thinking were so congenial to her own, had almost forgotten the circumstance that brought them acquainted; she had almost forgotten her elopement, and even her lover, until both were recalled to her mind, as she pursued the narrative of her life soon after they renewed their journey.

As the young Lady took up her story from the earliest dawn of memory, and continued it through the period of her succeeding years, the fond parent dwelt with peculiar satisfaction upon her accents; but while the fair relator proceeded,

ceeded, the Countess frequently sighed at the progress of a tale, which seemed the counterpart of her own history; the same vivacity, the same passion for splendor and gaiety, the same love of dissipation and disregard to the world, she discerned in her daughter's conduct as had been attended with such unhappy consequences to herself!

This idea threw her into a fit of musing; and Adelaide had three times inquired into some particulars concerning Captain O'Glitter, before she attended to the interrogation. Fortunately for her, while she was considering what answer to make, the carriage stopped, and the servant informed them they were at Oxford, where they had determined to take some repose.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

A Stop being put to the flight, and the story of Lady Adelaide, by the arrival of the carriage at Oxford, where the ladies had determined to take some repose, we shall, if the reader does not feel the same inclination, while we leave them to recover the fatigue of their journey, return to town, and see what effect the secession of so lovely a part of the family, had upon the Earl of Belyoir.

As soon as Lady Harriet was disengaged, she went to her sister's apartment, and upon inquiring for her was informed by her servant that she was at Lady Whirl's: she then immediately comprehended the whole scheme, and returned to the drawing-room to wait the event of it.

She had not waited long ere she heard a bustle in the hall; and going to the staircase to gain some information as to the cause of it, two voices, one of which she knew to be her father's,

father's, and the other Sir Paul Primitive's, struck her ear. The former said, "I am certain you must be mistaken, Sir Paul; I have too good an opinion of my daughter to suppose her capable of making such an appointment; and if she was imprudent enough, it was impossible she could fulfil it, as she is now, by indisposition, confined to her chamber."

"I am glad of it!" said the other voice, "for though I believe the lady as little likely to run out of bounds, as any fair one in the parish of St. George's: yet your Lordship knows the task is difficult, sometimes, to restrain female vivacity."

"The numbers and tenses perfectly agreed; but, as your Lordship said, the young Lady is in *domus*, I shall turn the *accusative* case into the *dative*, and grant that it is impossible she could be *preterite* and *present* at the same time."

This conversation brought them to the drawing-room, where my Lord, with some emotion, asked the trembling Harriet, "when she had seen her sister?"—"Before dinne," was her answer. "Before dinner!" said the Earl,

Earl, "Have you not been to inquire after her health?"

"I am just returned from her chamber, but her servant informs me that she is gone to Lady Whirl's."

"Gone to Lady Whirl's," said the Earl, "that is impossible. I fear, Sir Paul, your information is too well founded, for my sister dined out of town, and will not be at home to night."

"I thought," said Sir Paul, "that notwithstanding the anomalies and precipitation of the gentleman's speech, which rendered it wholly indeclinable, that that was the only construction that could be put upon it."

"Where are the servants?" said the Earl, ringing the bell with the greatest fury. "Get the horses saddled! Let my daughter be sought every where! I'll pursue her myself. I'll be revenged of the violator of my honour!"—"In the mean time, Sir Paul, inform me what the fellow said with whom you had the conversation just now; perhaps it may serve as a clue." * *

"I will," returned the Baronet, "though you will rather find it a tangled skein than a clue,

clue, as it had neither connection, sense, nor grammar. You know that there are six cases of Latin nouns."

"Damn the Latin nouns!" exclaimed the Earl, "What have they to do with my daughter? She's gone, I shall never see her more! Stolen from me! Let the fire-arms be prepared! I'll pursue the villain to the remotest corner of the earth."

As the Earl was about to quit the room, Lady Harriet threw herself before him, and embracing his knees: "Hold my Lord," she said, "nor suffer the impulse of your passion to endanger your health. My sister is safe, and under the most honourable protection. If you will permit me to attend you in your study, I will explain her situation to you, and my motives for acting in the manner I have done respecting her!"

The astonishment of the Earl, at this speech, continued some minutes after he had raised his daughter; at length he gave her his hand saying, "No part of my dear Harriet's conduct has hitherto wanted explanation, and I have a better opinion of that of your sister since you are privy to it; though, I must

must confess, I am impatient to be satisfied on both points."

"If Sir Paul will excuse us for a few minutes," said Lady Harriet.

"I am engaged," said the Baronet, "and only came back to give my Lord the information which I collected, by a few notes of interrogation, which some expletives, and unmeaning interjections, caused me to put to some persons that were attending with a carriage in the street. They were rather rude at last; but if they renew their insolence, I shall teach them a lesson, that perhaps they will not like to learn."

"Let my servants attend you," said the Earl.

"By no means, my own are in waiting: but whoever insults Sir Paul Primitive, will, perhaps, have reason to lament, that they did not before-hand read the motto to my arms, which, like that of the order of the thistle, is

"Nemo me impune lacessit."

When the Earl and his daughter were alone, the latter addressing him with great solemnity, said, "I wished, my Lord, for this opportunity

nity to ease your parental fears respecting my sister. She is absent, but in perfect safety; and, perhaps, she owes her safety to her absence."

"Absent, yet safe!" said the Earl. "Could she be in greater safety than under her father's roof? For Heaven's sake, my dear Harriet, explain yourself, you are not used to deal in mysteries; but, I must confess, that at present, I do not understand you."

"I fear, my Lord, you do not! yet when I think of what has passed, I stand astonished at my own temerity, in daring to appear before one parent as the advocate for another!"

"A parent!" said the Earl, "Good Heaven, to what does your discourse tend? Recollect yourself, my dear Harriet; my concern arose from the absence of your sister. My inquiries were directed to her present situation; yet, you avoid that subject, and talk of a parent: What am I to understand by this?"

"That my sister's absence, and my mother's sorrow are connected! That Adelaide is now with her, and that I, for the best of purposes, have been the instrument of plac-

ing them together! Oh, my Lord! my father! frown not on your Harriet. Listen, with patience, and I will explain the mystery that clouds this affair."

"Do so," said his Lordship, "for, at present, I am upon the rack of impatience!"

Lady Harriet then began her narration, with the account of her sister's acquaintance with Captain O'Glitter; and although she did not mention the agency of the fairy, by whose means she became acquainted with it: she pursued her story down to the period that Adelaide had consented to elope with him.

"How was that design frustrated?" said the Earl.

"By the intervention of my mother," replied his daughter, who proceeded to shew how she had first met the Countess; how she had laid the conduct of her sister before her, and the subsequent measures that had been taken, in order to withdraw the young lady from the dangerous situation in which she stood, and place her far out of the reach of the machinations of the Captain, of whose character, she added, she had by means which were

were she to state, he would think visionary, received a very unfavourable impression.

"I should hardly," said the Earl, with great solemnity, "think any means visionary by which you gained a true idea of a character, which though, like the possessor of it, specious; I know to be profligate and abandoned. It is but a few hours since I received an intimation, that the gentleman in question, had gained admission into those elegant societies which my daughter frequented; and that he had been particular in his attention to her: I had therefore determined, after talking with her upon the subject, to have removed her immediately into the country. Your scheme in this respect, you see meets my own ideas: but there is another part of it," he continued with great sternness, "that I think exceedingly reprehensible. How durst you, officious girl! interfere betwixt me and the unhappy Countess? Did you not know the situation in which we stood with respect to each other?"

"It would be a violation of truth, my Lord," said Lady Harriet, trembling, "if I was to say I did not!"

“Our present situation, you might know,” returned the Earl, “but our former, it is impossible you could either know or conceive. If you could, it would make your crime the greater, for you would know, that long after marriage, I did not merely love—I adored the beautiful object of whom that picture can give you but a faint idea. That I lived but to oblige her!—that there was nothing, that even extravagance could wish, or money could purchase, but what she commanded. Distinction, state, splendour, were her due, and therefore not to be mentioned by me—but, for my sincere love, for my unbounded indulgence, for my unwearied attention, even to her foibles, I might have expected some consideration, and some return. Alas! what return—what consideration did I meet with? Was it in her unbounded dissipation?—in her total neglect of her family?—in her extravagance?—in her abandonment of the maternal duties?—in gaming? Good heaven! let me proceed no further in the black catalogue: the idea of how I have loved, and what I have suffered, will revive all my former emotions,
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harrow up my soul, and drive me into madness!"

"God forbid, my dear father!" said Lady Harriet, throwing her arms around him.

"Forgive, oh forgive your daughter, whom you once honoured with your good opinion.

—Forgive her, although she should confess that all you have now stated, she already knew; for who could be ignorant of the love, the tenderness, the indulgence of the Earl of Belvoir to his unhappy Countess! It was long the theme of every tongue; and repeated to me before I knew the import of the words! Since I have had the power to observe, and reflect, I have been, from your goodness and benignity, the more sensible of the loss which the indiscretion of my unfortunate mother has caused her to sustain, in being, for so many years, banished from your presence: and from the impulse of that sensibility I have acted.

"There is, my Lord, in the human mind, I mean the female, sometimes a constitutional propensity to listen to flattery, to be fascinated with the charms of rank, of splendor, and all the concomitants of an elevated station: and there is, I fear, in the human mind,

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here

here my observation is general, a desire to take advantage of the youth and inexperience of a beautiful object, who happens to be so distinguished. When a young woman, who has been nurtured in the sequestered vale of life, launches into the great world, reflect, for a moment, my dear father! how different, how novel the scene must be to her! With every object around to inflame her passions, how is it possible for her to forbear being attracted by them? While every mouth expresses its admiration, is it in nature to doubt their sincerity?

“When the false friends, and insidious flatterers, by whom she is surrounded, have made an impression upon her mind, they consider their task as more than half performed. The envy that ever follows personal charms, elegant accomplishments, and elevated rank, then begins to assume every specious form, to lay itself out for, and take advantage of every weakness of the intellectual faculty, of every foible, in order to lure the inconsiderate female to her ruin. Happy, in that respect, are those, my Lord, who, like my mother, escape from the snares by which they are

en-

enviored, without any stigma upon their virtue; and who have receded in time from the brink of the precipice. Happy indeed, would she be, if you, my dear father, should think seventeen years, seventeen of the years which are called the best of human life, devoted to solitude and reflection, some atonement for past error. If you should think that there was some merit in a young Lady, beautiful as the Countess, withdrawing intirely from society, and, in seclusion, viewing the other side of the picture; looking upon the world with an eye which will enable her truly to appreciate its value, if she should ever be again united to her husband, her friends, and more than all, to her daughters. Oh!" said she, throwing herself at his feet, "may the merciful God! the parent, and author of forgiveness, inspire me with eloquence to move you, my dear father, to extend forgiveness to a mother, no less dear, so that she may be restored to Adelaide and to myself, whose time of life particularly require her care and attention!"

The Earl, who was affected with this solemn adjuration even to tears, stood some minutes,

after he had raised his daughter, with his arms around her, he had just begun to speak, when the door was thrown open with some precipitation, and Dr. Lewis entered.

If this groupe were surprised at this intrusion, that which possessed the worthy clergyman was still greater, he recoiled a few paces back, and it was some moments before he could say, "I humbly crave your Lordship's, and Lady Harriet's pardon, that the first time I ever took advantage of a privilege so often granted me, that of invading your retirement, without the formality of an annunciation, I should be so unfortunate as to interrupt you.—My only excuse is, that I thought your Lordship alone; and therefore wished to communicate a report, which has already found its way into a pretty large circle, where I spent the evening, and which I flatly contradicted: though it was told in a manner so circumstantial and minute, as to give to it too much the air of probability and truth."

"Your interruption, as you call it, my good Dr. Lewis!" said the Earl, "could never have been more seasonable, as in the situation

situation I was, I knew not what to say, which situation arose from the circumstance to which you allude, the elopement of my daughter Adelaide."

"That indeed," replied the Doctor, "is a circumstance, which I have heard reported, with every aggravation that malice could suggest. But I hope the whole story is a fabrication."

"Seldom," said Lady Harriet, "is the malignity of the town set afloat, without some little stimulative, without some foundation, however unsubstantial: this is fortunately the case with respect to our dear Adelaide; that she has eloped is a fact, though the world is mistaken, not only with respect to the name, but the sex of her companion. She then concisely informed him of the event which has been the subject of this and the preceding chapter, and in conclusion said—before you came, my reverend preceptor! guide of my youth, and father of my mind; I was wishing for abilities superior, for eloquence more persuasive than my own, to range themselves on my side, and in this moment, when the heart of his Lordship seems to be softened to-

wards her, to plead the cause of my unfortunate mother, Heaven has granted my wish, and sent to my assistance, the man, for whose opinion the Earl has the greatest respect, whose arguments have ever had the greatest weight with him, and whose doctrine and example, have been the guides, to which not only the family, but the neighbourhood have looked up as the rule of their conduct."

"I am," returned Dr. Lewis, "a man not insensible to flattery, when his Lordship has done me the honour to ask my advice, or commend my endeavours to promote the happiness of my fellow-creatures, he has touched a chord, which hath vibrated to my heart; if, therefore, I was so sensible of the good opinion of my patron, how much more must I be related, when the lovely representative of the lovely Amelia Gisborne, deigns to ask my aid, to second exertions, which do so much honour to her piety, and tenderness. If such an advocate is not attended to by his Lordship, it would be madness for me to attempt to move him. Yet arduous as the task may seem, I will attempt it; and for this

on behalf of the poor, I will reason
there

reason I mentioned the Countess by her maiden appellation.

“ If your Lordship,” he continued, addressing the Earl, “ will turn your eyes to that picture, you will reflect, at the time when that was painted, upon the conversation which we had concerning the fair original. You will also recollect my opinion of her subsequent conduct, and the endeavours I used to prevent your separation; you will still further remember, that I have always been an advocate for the Lady—and that” * * *

“ I recollect all this and much more, my dear Lewis,” said the Earl, interrupting him, “ but for heaven’s sake, spare me upon the subject at present! I have this night been taken by surprise, and my grief for the indiscretion, my anger at the flight of Adelaide turned into another channel. The eloquence, the emotion of Harriet, has had considerable weight with me; and when you, whom I so much respect and venerate, range on the same side, I find it impossible to stand against two such advocates. Let us therefore break up the conference for this night, lest one hour should overturn a resolution persisted in for years; at the same time, I think there is so

much merit in the exertions of the Countess, to save her daughter from a fate, perhaps more unfortunate than her own, that I shall give the subject the most serious consideration."

The Doctor said, that "the subject did indeed deserve the most serious consideration. The merit of the Countess," he continued, "is great, not only in the late instance, but in her exemplary conduct through a series of years, which I have often mentioned to your Lordship."

"You have! you have! my valued friend," said the Earl, "perhaps I have been to blame: but of that no more to night! Dry your tears, my dear Harriet," he continued, as he embraced his daughter. "You leave a friend in my bosom that seems disposed to second your exertions and your eloquence; exertions and eloquence from so lovely an advocate, must turn the balance in any cause; judge then what effect they must have upon a father and a husband, in favour of a once adored wife."

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CHAPTER
II

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

THE Countess and the lovely Adelaide Belvoir, the reader will recollect, we left at Oxford, where, as they continued till late the next morning, the latter expected to be overtaken by her lover. She had, during the time they were at breakfast, more than once gone to the window, and her heart palpitated at the sound of every carriage driving into the yard of the inn.

She frequently looked towards the door, and at the entrance of every servant, she expected to hear of the Captain's arrival. She had, during the hours of retirement, reflected much upon her present situation, which she considered as a very singular one, and had formed an idea that the lady she was now with, although the Captain's relation, was of the same opinion.

These thoughts preyed upon her mind, and communicated to her features an air of pensiveness,

siveness, which was observed by the Countess, who, with caresses, inquired into the cause; but that, alas! whatever inclination she might have to open her heart to her, it was impossible to discover. Perhaps it was not necessary, for as her uneasiness and anxiety were too visible to be suppressed, so was the cause of them too apparent to be mistaken.

She wondered the Lady had not once hinted that she thought the Captain's arrival was delayed longer than she could have imagined; perhaps he had changed his mind—perhaps had been stopped by the menaces or expostulations of her family. At any rate, she had concluded that the Lady meant to stay at Oxford until they heard from him, when the servant entered and announced that the chaise was ready for them to proceed on their journey.

Lady Adelaide was at the window eagerly examining the carriages as they passed, when she heard this report. She started, the tears came in her eyes as she tottered to a chair.

“Are you not well, my lovely charge?” said the Countess, bending over her with an anxiety truly maternal.

"Perfectly well! madam," she replied.

"I was only surprised—"

"Surprised! my dear, at what?"

"At hearing the servant say, every thing was ready for our departure from hence."

"Did you wish to stay longer in this City?"

"By no means, madam, though I must confess, I did not expect we should proceed on our journey so suddenly."

"Our journey," said the Countess, "will not be a very long one; but if you have any reasons for wishing to stay here, so much do I desire to oblige you, that I will immediately order the horses to be taken off."

"Reasons! madam," said Lady Adelaide, bursting into tears; "I have no reasons but what are known to you. I am an unhappy girl! I believe my distress arises from the fear of losing your friendship and protection; I seem alone in the world, and wish to cling to you for support."

"Do you! my lovely charge!" said the Countess, fervently embracing her; "then depend upon it, I will never forsake you till I see your heart at ease, till I see you reconciled to

to your family, and in a situation both honourable and happy."

Soothed by these assurances, Lady Adelaide suffered herself to be led to the carriage, which immediately left Oxford. As they travelled along, the Countess endeavoured to dissipate the weight that hung upon her daughter's heart, by her remarks upon the country, little anecdotes of families whose seats they passed, and general observations.

Lady Adelaide, though her grief was great, had every hour more reason to admire the elegant and elevated mind of her companion, nor was she less struck with the goodness of her heart, which her attention and endeavours to alleviate her sorrow exhibited.

The journey of these fair travellers ended at a handsome house which stood at some distance from the road, and in the vicinity of a small town on the border of Gloucestershire. When the carriage drove up, a pair of folding gates were thrown open and discovered a court, in the midst of which was a circular grass-plot, surrounded by a walk which led up to the door. Lady Adelaide observed, that the utmost neatness and order seemed to pervade every part through which they passed.

She

She was also struck with the respectful joy which seemed to mark the demeanor of the domestics upon the arrival of their mistress.

The Countess led her daughter into a parlour, which overlooked the garden, furnished with books, musical instruments, some elegant specimens of needlework, and beautiful prints; and embracing her said—"If you, my lovely friend, could guess at the sensations of my heart in this happy moment, you would not wonder that I am denied the power of expressing them as I could wish!

"Welcome, oh! thrice welcome, my charming Adelaide! for so I must call you; welcome to this house, which has hitherto been the house of sorrow; but, cheered with your presence, will, I hope, in future, be the mansion of happiness!"

Though Lady Adelaide was startled at the energy of this address, accompanied as it was with a warm embrace, there was something in the person and manner of the Countess that so much excited her respect and admiration, something in her voice which went so immediately to her heart, that she returned her embrace with fervour, saying—"Oh! madam,

dam, this can be no other than the mansion of happiness to me, while it contains a lady whom I so justly admire, and to whom I have such vast obligations !”

The Countess, having ordered some refreshments, proceeded to shew her the chamber and dressing-room that were designed for her use. “ The fitting up this apartment,” she said, “ of which the furniture is my own work, and the ornaments my own designs, has been one of the amusements of my solitary hours. I had no end in view when I decorated it, but that it might be ready for the occasional visits of a female friend ; however, no one, except myself, has hitherto occupied it. Had I known whom I should have for my first visitant, I should have bestowed more attention upon its embellishment.”

Lady Adelaide blushed, while she observed that the taste and elegance displayed in the apartments, rendered them far superior to any thing she could desire or deserve ; all that she wished was to retire to her chamber, as from the hurry and perturbation of that and the preceding day, she found herself suffering

fering from bodily fatigue, and a discomposure of spirits.

At this intimation, all the mother arose in the mind of the Countess. She summoned the person that was to attend on her daughter, to whom she strongly recommended her, and heartily acquiesced in the young lady's opinion, that repose was necessary; she therefore, after she had made her take some whey, left her to the enjoyment of it, telling her, as she departed, that her own chamber was at no great distance, and that the maid was stationed in the next room.

However necessary repose might be to the fair fugitive, it did not appear to be a state that she was capable of enjoying. Her active mind, now she was alone, had wandered to London, to her father—to her sister—to Lady Whirl. She thought of what had been the probable consequences of her elopement, the grief of her family, the scandalous and malignant reports that had been circulated at her expense. “Good heaven,” said she, “what could have possessed me? How could I be tempted to quit my father’s house upon such an excursion? to risk the opinion of the world,

world, the applause of my own heart, in favour of a man who neglects me, who does not even keep the appointment which I was weak enough to make with him?" As her thoughts were now turned upon the Captain, she began to imagine it was impossible that he should be wilfully guilty. She run over his behaviour from the first of their acquaintance, and compared every part of it with the other; the result of which was, that she acquitted him of any premeditated coldness or disrespect in this absence, which she rather supposed had arisen from some unforeseen accident, or a desire of staying in town till the storm had blown over. At any rate, she was sure he would write the next day. When she had thus settled the matter in her own mind, she became somewhat easier; and would probably have sunk to that state of rest which her constitution so much required, had not the singularity of her present situation disturbed her thoughts. She wondered the lady she was with, although a relation of the Captain's, had scarcely mentioned his name; and, indeed, she saw, or at least imagined, that she artfully turned the discourse, whenever

blow

whensoever it seemed to be verging toward him. Here was an ample field for speculation; and she gave herself up to it, till, wearied with thought and watching, she sunk into the arms of *Somnus*.

Whilst the lovely Adelaide was losing her cares, and enjoying the blessings which

“Tir'd Nature's great restorer, balmy sleep!”

dispenses to us with a liberal hand, in the morning of life, the anxious mother was revolving in her mind the events that had so recently taken place, and considering in what manner she should make the discovery to her daughter, which, although she wished, she almost dreaded.

From the representation of Lady Harriet, and some subsequent observations of her own, she saw, or thought she saw, that Captain O'Glitter had obtained the greatest ascendant over the mind of Adelaide. The journey she had taken was the strongest proof that any woman could have given of a violent passion; but even that proof, great as it was, was strengthened by her ineffectual struggles to conceal her impatience and anxiety. She
there-

therefore trembled when she thought of the effect, which the discovery of the deception that had been practised, would have upon her. " 'Tis true," she cried, " the discovery will be double. Would to heaven the finding of a parent may compensate, to Adelaide, for the loss of a lover!"

It will hardly be necessary to state the pleasure of the Countess the next morning, when she found that, although the day was far advanced, the young Lady still enjoyed her repose: in fact, fatigue of body and anxiety of mind had a long struggle with love when she first retired; but as there were two parties against one, the contest was considered, by the juvenile god, as unequal, notwithstanding he maintained it a considerable time, till finding the arrows which he aimed at her heart were caught by his rivals; and, having exhausted all his quiver, he thought it prudent to retreat, and return to attack the fair object when he was sure of having the advantage. When he fled, his opponents, having obtained the honours of the field, also receded: and *Somnus*, who, as we have observed, had, with cautious approaches, been encircling her, now took absolute possession;

session; and, it must not be concealed, that she continued in his arms almost twelve hours.

The Countess, though she dedicated the morning to writing to Lady Harriet, began to be uneasy at a nap, which she feared might be the consequence of indisposition, when the fair Adelaide awoke. Strange were her sensations at first, the reader will not doubt, as they arose from the strangeness of every object around her. She endeavoured to recollect where she was, what had passed; but for a few moments her ideas were all confusion. At length the God of Love, seeing this was a proper time, returned to the charge; or, to drop the metaphor, the Captain rushed into her mind, followed by the promise she had made him, her elopement, journey, and all the consequences that had ensued, which afforded sufficient food for meditation, and on which she was luxuriously feasting, when, turning, she observed the Countess standing by her bedside.

She had, indeed, stood there some minutes, observing symptoms of grief and anxiety in her daughter,

daughter, which awakened all the mother in her bosom.

“ I came, my lovely charge, to congratulate you —— ”

“ Upon what ? ” said Adelaide, “ starting up in apparent emotion ! ”

“ Upon the long and comfortable repose you have enjoyed,” returned the Countess, without seeming to remark her uneasiness.

“ Repose, resulting from moderate fatigue, is the sweetest sensation the human system can feel: but alas! it is only in youth we can enjoy it. In that gay season trifling disappointments pass over the mind like summer clouds over a serene atmosphere, without leaving the least trace behind them.”

“ Trifling disappointments ! ” said Lady Adelaide. “ Oh, Madam ! I scarce know what I say—where I am. You have heard some news which you think requires caution in the delivery ; but believe me, Madam, I have a firmer mind than you imagine ! I am quite a heroine,” she continued, smiling thro’ tears ; “ and after the rash and disgraceful steps I have taken, am prepared to expect the worst consequences.”

“Do you, my dear, my lovely charge!” said the Countess, throwing her arms around her as she sat up in the bed, “do you repent the step you have taken?”

“Sincerely! devoutly! It was rash—it was foolish! It was a measure that no man of honour ought to have proposed, nor no woman in her senses to have agreed to. I have reversed the fable of Daphne; have pursued—what? a lover! Heavens! would I were changed to a tree, like her! What will my father, my dear Harriet, the world, say of the once gay, thoughtless Adelaide? Where shall I hide my blushes?”

“In my bosom,” said the Countess, “my dear, dear daughter! for so I must call you. I will stand betwixt you and the malice of the world! I will clear your fame! endeavour to reconcile your father! and bring your sister to your embraces! Nay, more; I will, I must discover a secret, or it will burst my bosom. I am ——”

At this instant the bell rung with such violence, as increased the alarm of the trembling Adelaide.

VOL. I.

I

“Who-

"Whoever you are!" she exclaimed, "Dear Madam, protect me, the Captain's come!"

"Impossible!" said the Countess. As she was proceeding the Chamber-maid entered, and said, "A Gentleman in a post-chaise and four, who says he is just arrived from London, desires to have a few minutes conversation with the Lady of the house."

"Has the Gentleman no name?" returned the Countess, with great calmness.

"Certainly he has one," replied the maid; "but he flurried me so with his questions that I forgot to ask it."

"Well, go down and endeavour to get more accurate information.—Stay; for fear of some mistake, I had better see him myself."

"He expressed great hurry and impatience," said the maid.

"Is he a young gentleman?" asked the trembling Adelaide.

"He did not seem, from what I can recollect, very young."

"Oh, Madam!" she cried, "protect me! save me!—my father is arrived!"

"Your

"Your father, child!" said the Countess; "he, surely, is not your father! Gracious heaven! if it were, how should I see him? No, 'tis impossible; he would not have broken thus abruptly upon us. Tell the gentleman I will wait upon him in a few minutes. And you, my dear charge, compose your mind! comfort yourself with the assurance that, whatever may be the result of this interview, no ill consequences can ensue to you from it. I have suffered too much from anxiety to keep you long in suspense. In the mean time you will dress: perhaps I may have occasion to desire your company below. At any rate believe me, that your interest and happiness are dearer to me than even my own: and may that assurance quiet the perturbation of your spirits!"

It is easier to prescribe than practise: the very mention of her father, by Lady Adelaide, had raised such a commotion in the bosom of the Countess, that she was obliged to hold by the balustrade, and stop upon the landing-place, as she descended the stairs. She stood a few moments to endeavour to recover herself; but finding that her agitation rather in-

creased than subsided, she resolved to rush forward and know the worst at once. In this disposition she approached the parlour: the door was opened by the servant that preceded her; and entering, she beheld a Gentleman whom she had never seen before. The time he took in making two very profound bows at a distance, and a third when he approached her, gave her an opportunity to resume her composure. She returned his obeisances with a curtsy; and, pointing to a chair, begged him to be seated.

He watched with the greatest attention till she had set him the example; then, taking his place with great ceremony, began —

“ There are times, Madam, when the wisest of men may be betrayed into intemperance and passion: *Socrates* himself, as every school-boy knows, was not always so guarded in his temper, as he is described in Plato’s *Phædon*; and, perhaps, if *Xantippe* had married him a few years sooner, and provoked him in the manner she did, he would have turned her out of doors !”

“ Sir !” said the Countess, in the utmost amazement, “ I protest I do n’t understand you !”

“ Pro-

"Probably not!" the Gentleman replied; "nor is it very material: I only meant to offer an excuse for my impatience and anger to your servants. I had no right to tutor them; I had no right to speak to them in the *imperative mood*, or be guilty of any irregularity."

"Sir!" said the Countess.

"Pardon me, Madam; I was only alluding to what happened betwixt myself and your servants, to whom I began in the *vocative*, and then proceeded to the *accusative* case.

"Sir!" said the Countess, with some impatience, "I really cannot conceive what you mean: if you have any business I shall listen to it with attention; if you have not, I must inform you that I have, and at the same time desire an end may be put to this visit."

"Madam!" replied the Gentleman, pulling down his ruffles, "I should scarcely have undertaken the task of driving post from London, inquiring at all the inns, in the *preterperfect tense*, if a carriage with two Ladies had passed? without having very particular business. In fact, the fair Lady Adelaide

Belvoir has, as I may say, played truant, and I have taken this journey to reclaim her!"

"What right, Sir, have you to pursue, or, as you say, to endeavour to reclaim Lady Adelaide Belvoir?"

"Right, Madam, is a word, when used as a substantive, of large import! It is derived from the Saxon: but as it would lead me too far to trace it through its different modifications to its etymology, I shall answer your interrogation simply:—I had that right which custom gives a favoured lover."

"A favoured lover!" exclaimed the Countess, starting with surprise! "Are you the favoured lover of Lady Adelaide?"

"Certainly," returned the Gentleman, colouring; "is there any thing in my person or appearance that should make such a circumstance a matter of wonder, or take it out of the *dative*?"

"Sir, I entreat your pardon; my surprise arose from the circumstance of your having traced the young lady to this place; nor can I conceive from whom you received your information."

"That

"That is immaterial," he continued. "As soon as I heard of the fair lady's elopement I carried the news to her father."

"Her father," cried the Countess. "Do you know her father?"

"Certainly, though a great deal older than myself, we were school-fellows: let me see, he went to the university when I was at the bottom of the fourth form."

"Bless me! then it is impossible you can be Captain O'Glitter?"

"Captain O'Glitter! no Madam, had any man taken me for that ignorant Irishman, I should have called him to book for disgracing me. Captain O'Glitter, Madam, sent me a challenge, in which no one rule of grammar, or orthography was preserved. Had it been upon any other occasion I should not have answered such an illiterate production. As it was, I gave him the meeting, and the consequence was, that he will be incapable of any journey, except it be to the Stygian Lake for some time."

"Heavens!" said the Countess, trembling, "What will become of the reputation of my
I 4. dear

dear Adelaide? A duel! she will be the talk of the whole town!"

"And country too, Madam, I hope. I sent an account of it myself to a paper that I correspond with; it made as pretty a paragraph"—* * * *

"Good God! is the name of my child made the sport of the licentious tongues, of the idle and inquisitive, bandied about in the news of the day?"

"With your child, Madam," returned the gentleman, "I have no concern; but if you would insinuate, that the name of Lady Adelaide Belvoir, has been by me used either lightly or improperly, it is a part of speech, which I must take the liberty to contradict. It was upon that very account I fell under the lash of Captain O'Glitter. When I left the house of my honoured friend the Earl of Belvoir, where I had dined: just as I turned the corner of the square, my carriage was stopped by a chaise and four, which stood almost across the street; some altercation betwixt the drivers of each vehicle ensued, and the vulgar tongue was rendered still more grating to my ears by barbarous idioms, and provincial accents.

A mob

A mob had by this time assembled, I let down the glass, at the moment a voice exclaimed, with an oath, she's gone, irrecoverably gone, and as nobody knows where, it will be to no purpose to follow her! Finding by the sound of his voice, and arrangement of his words, that the eloquent gentleman whom I could just discern, was an Hibernian; either presentiment, or curiosity, led me to inquire what was the matter? "Matter enough," he replied with a volley of execrations which I shall *delete*. "I have lost a woman who loved me to distraction!"—"What woman?"—"Lady Adelaide Belvoir. She made an appointment to run away with me this precious evening; and though I was before my time, I understand she has been too quick for me, and is gone off with a man in woman's cloaths."

"A man in woman's clothes!" said the Countess, blushing.

"That, Madam, was his assertion, which I flatly contradicted, and jumping out of my carriage, told him I would not suffer the name and reputation of Lady Adelaide to be made the sport of a street-lurking ruffian. That what he had said respecting her intended

elopement with him was false; that I knew her to be at home, and as to being in love, however true he might be in his data, the inference was wrong. A gentleman of erudition," said I, "has long courted her,"—he took fire at this, and in the most incorrect language began to accuse the fair Adelaide. I replied,—my servants and the people around interfered,—we were parted,—I returned to the Earl, to inform him of what I had heard, where I had the misfortune to find that part of the accusation against the young lady was founded.

"The next morning the Irish captain sent me a challenge, the event of which has been as I stated in my exordium, unpropitious to him."

"Heavens!" said the Countess, exceedingly agitated, "what a train of misfortunes have arisen from the indiscretion of my dear Adelaide. How came you, Sir, to discover the road we had taken? Who directed your pursuit to this place?"

"By the most fortunate circumstance that could have occurred: the boys that drove the chaise the first stage, were not only acquainted with

with my groom, but one of them had been in the service of the Earl, and consequently knew Lady Adelaide. Through his medium, I received such information that I easily traced your flight to Oxford, where I arrived last night, and where my servants inquiries were attended with such success, that I have been enabled to follow your chaise without any material deviation till I arrived at this place."

"What, Sir, is the purpose of your journey?"

"It is, Madam, to throw myself at the feet of Lady Adelaide, in the first instance; and to inform myself, what can have induced her to withdraw from her family, with a lady with whom she can be but little acquainted in the second."

"Have you her father's authority for what you are now doing?"

"I have not, Madam, seen the Earl since the night on which I left him in such agitation of mind on account of his daughter. I thought to reclaim the young lady would be the most acceptable service I could perform; and that he would readily pardon a zeal that had passion to plead in its excuse. Therefore,

let me intreat you, Madam, to suffer me to see the object of my adoration!"

"If I should be so inclined," said the Countess, "who am I to inform her is come to visit her?"

"My proper name, Madam, is *Paul Primitive*, to which the heroic deeds of my ancestors obtained the honourable addition of *Sir*; but, having thus made you acquainted with my appellation, I have to request, that I may be favoured with your's, as it may perhaps help me to develope the mystery of Lady Adelaide's elopement with, as I am informed, a perfect stranger."

"That mystery, Sir Paul, will be cleared when you hear that the stranger who carried off the young lady, was Amelia Countess of Belvoir! I see by your gestures and countenance that the discovery has surprised you; but, as I am obliged to retire, I hope by the time I return you will have recovered. The servant will wait upon you with any refreshment you please to order, for I hope you will understand, that as the friend of Lord Belvoir, you command in this house."

Whilst

Whilst the dialogue that we have just recorded was passing, the agitations of the fair Adelaide can scarcely be described. The Countess had been stopped, by the arrival of Sir Paul, at a very interesting period:—she was about to unfold a secret, nay the words almost trembled on her lips:—And how stopped? By a visitor, which she could only think was her father, or her lover. In her present situation she scarce knew which she would have soonest met. Her anxiety was little relieved by the servant who came to dress her, who said the gentleman seemed in great agitation when he arrived, and that she had heard him talk loud as she passed the parlour. It is certainly my father, she said, good Heaven! how shall I be able to see him? The length of the lady's absence confirmed her in her opinion; every moment her apprehensions increased. At every breath of wind she started,—every foot upon the stairs she thought the harbinger of a summons for her. At length the door opened and the Countess entered.

"Thank

"Thank God, my dear protectress, you are returned!" said Adelaide, flying to her.

"Is my father now in the house?"

"Your father! my dear, how could you suppose it? The gentleman below has, as he says, an interest in your welfare, but it is by no means paternal. He comes as a favoured lover. Blush not, Adelaide, I mean not to trifle with your sensibility. I see your present emotion with concern; but you best know if in any part of it it is to be attributed to the appearance of Sir Paul Primitive."

"Not the least! madam, I can assure you," said Lady Adelaide, recovering herself.

"As the friend of my father, I respect him; but as a lover * * Let me check myself, or I shall make use of too strong a phrase. What could induce him to follow me?"

"Love! replied the Countess, taking her hand; "love which has been the cause of far greater extravagancies in this Gentleman, who I sincerely wish had confined his interference to this journey. I see you are alarmed, but as what I have to say must come to your know-

knowledge, sooner or later, I had better relate it, in order to set before you the dreadful consequences that may ensue to young women at their entrance into life, from their want of caution in making acquaintance, or engagements. The female character begins to expand at a very early period; but whilst, like the sensitive plant, it unfolds its leaves to the sun, if it encounters the rude breath of slander, it shrinks, fades, contracts, and is scarcely ever to be revived." She then, as gently as possible, poured into the ears of the affrighted Adelaide, all that she had heard from the Baronet, and all the malignant rumours that she feared would be the consequence of the duel. Every moment, the sensibility of her hearer was more strongly excited, every moment her agitation became greater; till no longer able to endure the conflict of her passions, she threw herself into the Countess's arms, exclaiming—" Good heaven! what have I done? Why did I leave my paternal roof? Where shall I hide myself? What door will ever open to receive me?"

" Mine!" said the Countess, pressing her to her bosom.

" Yours!"

"Yours! alas, madam! how can I intrude upon you? When I reflect upon the circumstance that brought us acquainted, I am ready to die with shame. At the same time I feel an attachment, I am not able to account for. Sure I am at this instant labouring under a deception? Sure you are not what you seem?"

"Indeed, I am not!"

"Good heaven! then let me know the worst. Who are you?"

"Your mother!" said the Countess, straining her in her arms; "your fond! your affectionate! and, let me add, at this instant, your exulting mother."

"God be praised!" said Lady Adelaide, sinking at her feet. "God be praised! that I find myself under the roof and protection of a mother. How the strange events of the two last days have been brought about, heaven only knows; sensible of my own imprudence, I dare not look up to you, madam, for information; but, believe me, I have for some time repented of the rash engagement I had made, although from a false point of honour

and

and delicacy, I thought I was bound to perform it."

"I believe you, my dear Adelaide. Image of what I once was! I sincerely believe you. I read your uneasiness and anxiety in the workings of your mind."

"I rejoice that you have escaped the snares that were laid for you, and I doubly rejoice that you owe that escape to the interference of a sister."

"Has Harriet been my guardian angel?"

"She has acted under the directions of your sylph," said the Countess, smiling.

"Heaven send that all her predictions may be as fully verified. I have, my dear Adelaide, a melancholy picture to hold up to your view in my own life; I have much to say, but for that we must choose a fitter hour; the gentleman in the parlour will be impatient."

"I never can see him," replied Adelaide.

"You must, my dear, as the friend of your father," said the Countess. "Under a mother's protection, you surely could have no fears,

fears, even were the interview more formidable. He already knows our consanguinity."

"But the duel."

"I will take care," I said the Countess, as she led her out, "to repress his presumption, if he wishes to appear as the champion of my lovely Adelaide."

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

THE morning after the elopement of Lady Adelaide, and the scene between her father and Lady Harriet, with which we closed our thirteenth chapter; as the latter was after breakfast paying her diurnal attention to her vegetable nursery—when she had examined the different plants and flowers, she came at last to her favourite *minionet*. Pleased to observe that all the symptoms of decay which it had but a short time before exhibited, were vanished, that its tendrils spread over the vase in the most wanton luxuriance, that it breathed around the most odoriferous perfume, and flourished in pristine beauty. She stood for some moments gazing with pleasure upon it, and whilst she contemplated its charms with a fondness almost parental, the admonitions of the fairy, who had arisen from the vase, struck her mind. How happy, said she to herself, has it been for my dear Adelaide, that
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the suggestions of my heart (whether owing to the interference of a supernatural being, or the visionary illusion of my own mind thinking upon the subject, and assisted in its speculations by some rumours) have stimulated me to exertions which have, I hope, not only broken a dangerous and disgraceful connexion on the part of my sister, but will, under providence, be the means of restoring a long lost mother to the arms of her daughters.

"I fervently join in the hope that such may be the end of the pious and dutiful exertions of my lovely and beloved Harriet," said a voice which seemed to proceed from the vase, and the soft accents of which just reached the ears of the affrighted fair. Expecting every moment to see the fairy arise, she tremblingly retired a few paces; when the voice continued—

"Fear not, oh lovely and beloved Harriet! to approach the vase which contains your favourite plant.—My mission is performed, and I appear no more; yet ere I take my final leave, let me, your guardian sylph, congratulate you upon the escape of Adelaide, from the dreadful destiny that impended over her

her

her head. Though I have receded, do you continue her guide, monitor, and example. Young as you are, sense and observation have enabled you to discern the relaxed state of the morals and manners of the age. Foppery and frivolity have long reigned sole arbiters of the dress and amusements of the people, not one in a hundred of whom acts from the dictates of his own judgment; or, if a female, suffers herself to be guided by her own reason.

“Luxury and extravagance appear to have turned the brains of both sexes. The gaol of dissipation is set up, and the whole fashionable world seem, in flying towards it, to overturn every impediment.

“May my two favourites, Harriet and Adelaide, never become a part of that mass of beings, who only use their eyes and ears, as they are directed by fame and notoriety; who borrow their manners, their sentiments, their ideas, and even their sensations, from fashion. May you always have opinions, manners and morals, formed upon those of a select few, who, in the reign of folly and absurdity, have the sense to think, and the spirit to act, from the dictates of their own hearts;
and

and who would deem that celebrity infamous to which reason and religion must be sacrificed. A few words more, and then farewell for ever! I know you are doubting whether my former visits were not an illusion to your sight, and my present speech an illusion of your mind. Though no, Rosicrucian, you have from reading and reflection formed an opinion, that the actions of mortals have ever been in the hands of a supernatural guide; that their destinies are influenced by a supernatural agent. Cherish these thoughts as long as they stimulate you to the pursuit of knowledge, or assist you in the practice of virtue.

“ If fairies, sylphs, and gnomes, have so long lain dormant, that they are considered by some as the visionary ideas of heated imaginations; by others, as ingenious fables; let them still be so considered. When fable, allegory, and supernatural means are engaged in the service of religion, morality and virtue, they are nobly and usefully employed; therefore, when time hath mellowed the remembrance of the conversations and events that have passed betwixt us, although you may regard them but as a dream, let not their influence

fluence be totally erased from your mind; but leaving the absurdity of introducing a *fairy*, in this age, out of the question, only reflect whether you have derived any advantage from her advice and admonition, and when you nurture this beautiful plant, so much the object of your care, forget not, oh lovely and beloved Harriet! that it was once the residence of your ideal friend Minionet!"

Here the voice died upon the ears of the astonished Harriet. Trembling she stood by the side of the vase, till roused by a message from her father, who wished to see her in the library. "Is the Earl alone?" she said to the servant.

"I believe not, madam, Lord Edgar has been some time with his Lordship."

"Inform my father that I will attend him in a few minutes." She continued as she turned to the glass to adjust her head-dress: But so strongly were the feelings of her agitated mind conveyed to her hands, that she had scarce the power to reclaim the curls that had wandered over her forehead and lovely neck.

"Why," said she, as she advanced toward the door, "should I be thus agitated at the apprehensions of meeting a man introduced,

may recommended to me by my father? Have I not the greatest opinion of his honour and his love? Am not I affianced to him both by duty and inclination? Would I now retract, were retraction in my power?—Certainly not! Away then with doubts and fears, alike injurious to him and to myself!”

These cogitations brought the lovely Harriet to the door of the library; and the moment she opened it Lord Edgar flew to her, and, taking her hand, led her to a seat. Joy sparkled in his eyes, although his tongue faltered whilst he made his morning compliment.

Whether the fair daughter of Lord Belvoir guessed what was the cause of his extraordinary animation, is uncertain; but when she raised her's towards him her countenance was overspread with blushes, which were but little repressed when the Earl said,—

“ I sent not for you, my dear Harriet, to take a lesson from *your looks*, or study the powers of mute eloquence, but to endeavour, by verbal communication, to make you a sharer in the satisfaction I at present enjoy. I have this morning received a letter from the Countess of Belvoir !”

"From my mother!"

"From your mother," he continued, "and I am so well pleased with the contents, that this young Lord, whom I shall, from this time, consider as one of the family, could not have arrived in a more propitious moment to ask a favour of me. Here your expressive countenance apprizes me that you understand the nature of his request; therefore I will tolerate your silence, while I inform you I have promised that my exertions shall not be wanting to stimulate those gentlemen, whom he aptly called *priests of procrastination*, to unusual diligence; so that I have the hope, that in a few days all legal impediments to a certain event will be removed: nay, I have ventured to go further, —"

"My Lord!" said Lady Harriet, laying her hand upon her father's, in violent agitation."

"For Heavens' sake proceed, my Lord," said Lord Edgar; "inform her, whom my soul adores, my lovely Harriet, of the whole extent of your goodness; tell her that, as soon as you arrive at your seat, you wish to honour me with the greatest mark of your confidence,

by entrusting to me a treasure, which it shall be the pride and pleasure of my future life to endeavour to render myself worthy of."

"You had better," said the Earl, "explain all this to my daughter, while I go and fetch the letter which I have left in my closet. Harriet, as eminent for duty as she is for personal attractions, will not refuse the hand her father thus tenders her. Let this embrace, my children, be the seal of our union; and believe me, the hour in which the church sanctifies my right to call Lord Edgar son, will be one of the happiest in the life of your parent."

Were we perfectly acquainted with the arguments which Lord Edgar used, to induce the lovely Harriet to acquiesce to her father's arrangement, it would, as we are hastening to a conclusion, too much impede our progress to state them. When the Earl returned he informed his daughter, that, "as he meant to take Gloucestershire in the way to his seat, he purposed to set off the next day."

It was agreed that Lord Edgar, after he had made the necessary preparations in town, should repair to Somersetshire, and at Belvoir

Mansion

Mansion meet his lovely bride; where they were to be united.

Soon after this plan was settled the Bridegroom elect took his leave. Lady Harriet endeavoured to recover from the agitation which the preceding interview had impressed upon her spirits, while the Earl walked a few turns about the room evidently in as much perturbation, which having in vain tried to repress, he took the hand of his daughter and thus began:—

“When we last, my dear Harriet, talked upon the subject of your then unhappy mother, such was my surprise at the events that had just passed, and such the emotions of my mind, that I scarce knew whether I ought to praise, or blame you, for an interference which, I have since reflected, was stimulated by duty, and conducted by good sense. Your spirit, but more, your filial affection upon that occasion, have awakened sensations in my heart which had long lain dormant. Your exertions to preserve your sister from a connexion disgraceful to her, and disagreeable to me, have had their weight; and the part which the Countess has taken, with respect to Adelaide, hath

inclined me to review her conduct since our unfortunate separation, and turned the balance in her favour. She has, my dear girl! ever had a true and sincere friend in Dr. Lewis; and perhaps, truth and sincerity were never more fully displayed than they were, as she has long since been sensible, in his former animadversions upon her conduct, except in the attacks he has made upon my implacable temper, in her favour. Those attacks, since he has, in you, found so able and animated a coadjutor, have been renewed; and it will give you pleasure, when I inform you, with success. Seeing what evils were likely to have ensued, from trusting a young woman, whose constitutional vivacity was far greater than her prudence, at her entrance into life without a proper guide, I had turned my eyes inward, and taken great part of the censure from Adelaide to myself; nay more! I have recalled all my former fond ideas of my loved Amelia, blamed my unforgiving temper, which has for so many years deprived my children of a mother, myself of a wife, such as I wished her to be: I have done this, and pleased I am, that I had taken my resolution before the
arrival

arrival of this letter, which has confirmed it. We will to-morrow set out for Gloucestershire, where, while I extend my forgiveness to Adelaide, and restore my children to the arms of a mother, I hope, if I have carried my resentment too far, that I also shall be forgiven."

"Talk not of being forgiven, my dear dear father; you will be received with raptures," said Lady Harriet, throwing herself at his feet; "and the day that re-unites my parents, will be the happiest that your Harriet has ever yet known."

"I believe you, my dear child!" continued the Earl, "to promote the happiness of my daughters is the business of my life; to increase your present felicity shall be my earliest care, as it has been the subject of my most anxious cogitations. As I also know how much it will contribute to quell the apprehensions which in delicate female minds naturally arise from an approaching change of state, your trembling heart shall repose its sentiments in the bosom of a mother. From a mother's arms, Lord Edgar shall receive you. This I had resolved before I opened this letter, nor will you wonder that the contents of it confirmed

me in my resolution. When you have perused it, you will make the arrangements you may think necessary for our journey. I must do the same, therefore shall retire for the present."

Lady Harriet took the letter with her to her chamber; and read, with equal avidity and emotion, the following words:—

"My Lord,

"After a separation and silence of more than seventeen years, will you permit your once beloved Amelia, to steal from your more important concerns a few minutes, while she offers some ideas which her overburdened mind prompts her to submit to your perusal."

"Yet after a banishment of seventeen years, how can your once beloved, but, alas! indiscreet Amelia, address you? How offer any excuse for her former conduct? or how be assured if she did, that any excuse would be attended to? These were questions that I asked myself before I commenced the solemn but necessary task I have undertaken."

"I have, my Lord, during my long seclusion from the fashionable world, learned, I hope, justly to appreciate its value. I have
turned

turned my eyes inward upon myself, and taken a retrospective view of my former conduct. I have frequently drawn a picture of the gay thoughtless Amelia Gisborne, as she was under her parental roof, or an occasional resident at the mansions of partial friends, flattered, admired, applauded ! How often have I recalled to mind, my dear parents and tutors, listening with delight to the remarks of their daughter upon authors whom they had recommended; dwelling with pleasure upon every accent which denoted an expansion of ideas in the object they idolized. How often have I endeavoured to avert my mental eye from the picture which shewed a father and mother so indulgent, receiving that daughter returned to them a martyr to her own indiscretion, or the still more tragical piece which presented my reverend sire, my beloved, my amiable mother, mourning over a girl who had imbittered their latter days and, who at this instant, wonders how she could survive the stroke which, within a month of each other, deprived the world of two shining examples of conjugal affection, the poor of their advisers, consolers, and benefactors ; the church, in my father, of an un-

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ostentatious

ostentatious ornament, and society in my mother of a steady friend; and, as far as her sphere extended, a useful member."

"Oppressed with my own sensations, sensations which even time has not blunted, let me turn from the tenderly awful recollection of connexions long since dissolved, of parents long since departed, to the hour when accident brought your Lordship to their habitation, to the hour when you deigned to honour Amelia with your notice."

"You found me, my Lord, a simple country girl, with no other ideas of the great world, than those which I had acquired from books, from the description or warnings of my parents, or those which observation had enabled me to form during my occasional visits to music meetings, assemblies, balls, and other scenes of provincial splendour, to which my situation in life, and the partiality of elevated friends had introduced me. You saw, you loved, you adored the happy Amelia! you exalted the country girl to the rank of a Countess! Proud of your choice, you carried her to court; introduced her to your friends, and, at first, not only indulged her
in,

in, but recommended her to pursue, those pleasures with which the metropolis so liberally abounds."

"Brought from a scene of tranquil retirement, to a city which my father's aversion to a confused multitude, and my mother's ill-health had never before suffered me to see, I do not, even at this moment, wonder that a succession of splendour, gaiety, amusements, and dissipation almost turned my brain; nor, used to the language of indulgence, do I wonder that I had not discernment enough to distinguish flattery from sincerity; but I do wonder that I could so far forget the precepts of my parents, and the kind admonitions of your Lordship, as to suffer my understanding to be perverted, and to continue in a course of what is falsely called pleasure, long after I found that it was disagreeable to you, and indeed to myself."

"I will not, even in my present state of humiliation, pay so ill a compliment to my own judgment, as to say that I did not perceive the instability of fashionable friendships, the insincerity of fashionable connexions, long before our separation made them apparent;

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but

but to young woman of high rank, it does not seem very easy to recede. Placed on an elevated station, she thinks that her motions attract all eyes; and if disposition or example impel her toward the goal of dissipation, if either the love of pleasure or the dread of ridicule contribute to keep her in the flowery path, although at last she finds herself entangled in a labyrinth, as she has no clue to guide her, she continues to rush forward, till lost in its intricate mazes, wearied and exhausted in the pursuit, she falls never to rise again! Such is your fate ye votaries of folly! of pleasure! of passion! such is the fate of those that retreat not in time; but, alas! who can stop in the middle of their career; or say, thus far will I go but no further?"

"These reflections, though constantly in my mind, would not have found their way to that of your Lordship, had not an occasion arisen which renders it absolutely necessary for me to address you."

"When I left your mansion, I left behind me two infant daughters: how many pangs has my separation from them occasioned! My

dear

dear Harriet and Adelaide grew up in form, features, talents, and accomplishments; all that their father, all that the tenderest mother, in her most extravagant ideas of female perfection, could wish them to be. Chance, and chance only, brought my eldest to my arms, though I freely confess my journey to town was like one that I had before unsuccessfully taken to obtain a sight of my children. Perhaps, when your Lordship reflects, you will allow my being debarred that pleasure, to be almost the hardest part of my sentence."

"It would not be a subject on which one parent could write, or the other dwell with any satisfaction, were I to be more diffuse in my animadversions upon the conduct of Adelaide, than the necessity of the occasion requires. You have already been made acquainted with it, and also with the measures that have been taken to rescue her from a dangerous and disgraceful connexion; therefore, while I give my eldest daughter the praise to which she is so justly entitled, I cannot help looking with an eye of compassion upon the younger; who with a form such as I *once* possessed, seems to be endued with a still greater similarity to

K 6

me,

me, as I think I can discern *traits* of a vivacity of temper, and a love of splendor, gaiety, and pleasure, such as have been the cause of so many misfortunes to her unhappy mother."

"Trembling for the consequences which by experience I know may ensue from such a disposition, if not timely curbed and repressed; it has been my business to place them in the strongest point of view before her. The imprudence of her conduct in a late event, and her present state of humiliation upon that occasion, have given me an opportunity to enforce my arguments; and as I observe in her not only a large fund of good sense, but of good nature, I have the most sanguine expectation that they will be properly attended to. An absence from London will lay the ground-work of amendment, and contribute, with proper admonition, to wean her from the fashionable follies in which she penitently confesses she has been immersed; at the same time that the exultations of her fashionable friends over one, whom they will consider as a *fallen sister*, will shew in their true colours the envy and malignity resident in the

the human heart, and of which, youthful and generous minds never will be convinced but by experience."

"Having thus far explained myself in relation to my sentiments of my youngest daughter, and from my own sensations, ventured to prophecy that the late event may be of the greatest use, as it may enable her, when her judgment is matured by time, and her narrow escape impressed upon her mind by reflection, to become in discretion all that you could wish her, all that her sister now is; I would request your Lordship's directions with respect to her future destination. Here I tremble at my own temerity in urging a suit to you; but for the sake of my child, I am induced to hope that you will think my inspection of her conduct may be advantageous to her, and am therefore imboldened to ask, as the greatest indulgence and favour, that she may be allowed to remain with me some months longer. You, my Lord, will perhaps be inclined to grant my request; nay, to make an addition to my happiness by suffering Harriet, who, I understand, is upon the point of forming a connexion equally honourable and

and agreeable to all parties; before that event takes place to favour me with a visit, when you are assured that I shall consider the company of my children as a renewal of my existence, and date my life from that auspicious era."

"Having detained your Lordship so long, I shall venture but a few lines more before I conclude, and they are written with a view to reconcile you to yourself, if you should at any future period be induced to think that I have been treated with more harshness than my conduct, thoughtless and imprudent as I confess it to have been, absolutely demanded. To the conflicts that have passed, I have resigned my soul with the most patient acquiescence; convinced that those things which short-sighted mortals consider as misfortunes, during their progress through this vale of misery, frequently operate as blessings when poised in the great scale of eternity!"

"Adored by a noble husband, blessed with a beautiful offspring, placed in a situation nearly the most elevated, something was wanting to repress the self-exultation, the pride of Amelia! It was decreed that the

the scene should be reversed, and that her fall should be as conspicuous as her exaltation."

"To add to her mortification, it was further decreed, that her fall should be owing to herself, and that for a long, long series of years, she should remain a *widowed wife* and *childless mother*, without having it in her power to arraign the legality of her sentence, or in her inclination to breathe an accent against the justice of the judge by whom she was condemned."

"From that legality and justice, I do not even now appeal; I only implore that one part of my punishment may be remitted; and that the company of her dear children may be allowed to her; who, whatever afflictions fate may have in store for her, will, while memory holds a seat, remain

"Your Lordship's affectionate,

"AMELIA BELVOIR."

The Right Hon. the Earl of Belvoir.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

LADY Harriet, notwithstanding the agitation which this epistle produced in her mind, had read it twice, and was beginning to con it over the third time, when her servant entering hastily announced the arrival of Lady Whirl, and before she could receive orders to shew her in, that lady herself appeared. She was in a travelling dress, and her face and gestures betrayed evident marks of terror and confusion. "Niece," said she, "I declare I am almost frightened out of my senses. I am but this instant arrived in town, have been no further than Reading, and yet all this mischief to ensue during my absence. I hear the Captain is dead!"

"Good God!" said Lady Harriet, "Dead!"

"Dead as my poor coach-horse that staked himself upon Lord Piano's pole in last Saturday's bustle at the opera."

"Mercy

and Mercy upon me! When did your Ladyship hear this dreadful news?" "Hear it, child? I have heard nothing else from Hammettsmith turnpike. As I drove through Hyde Park, I believe my carriage was stopped by fifty friends to condole with me upon it! Why, my dear, do you ring with such alarm and trepidation?"

"Does not the occasion justify my fright?" said Lady Harriet, who continued ringing, although her servant was in the room. "I wish to inform my father of this dreadful event."

"If you mean to continue ringing till the sound of the bell reaches the ears of my brother, you have a harder task than you imagine, for I understand he is gone into the city."

"Is my father absent at this time? Good Heaven! what's to be done?"

"Calm your perturbation, and I'll inform you; and as you know Lord Whirl was engaged in more than one of these affairs before the misconstruction of the word *contempt* proved fatal to him, perhaps I am more able to advise

advise you than the Earl. The Captain has fallen; and although Sir Paul employed an agent to carry off my little Rantipole, I hear that since the duel he has joined her; laid his laurels at her feet; received her hand as a reward for his valour; and that they are by this time safe upon the Continent."

"You are misinformed!" said Lady Harriet, with great eagerness, "indeed, madam, you are misinformed."

"Impossible child! no one is seldomer misinformed or mistaken. I insist upon it that they set out from Oxford, where they met; for the Continent. Did not Sir Samuel Sneer, as he rode by the side of my carriage, wish me joy of the event!"—"Nothing," he continued; "gives a young lady such an *ecstasy* as to have two heroes contend for her. Fortune, I understand, has been propitious to the knight in buckram. We all rejoice at it, for as the fair Helen, your pupil, has resigned her charms to old Menelaus, we hope it is with the laudable intention to make him share the fate of his Grecian prototype, as soon as she can fix on one to undertake the part of Paris."

"Heavens!"

"Heavens!" said Lady Harriet, deeply colouring, "durst any one talk in this manner of my Adelaide, of my lovely, my beloved sister?"

"No passion, Harriet!" continued Lady Whirl; "you look so like your father, when angry, that I declare you almost frighten me. Who can help peoples' talking: there was Lady Sting, Captain Pepper, Lord Listen, Sir Frederic Fume, Old Lady Singe; that finds admission into every house for the sake of her little *morceaux*; and Lady Bell Blab, whom we call the Morning Chronicle, all in the same story; nay it has found its way into the news-papers: the Mirror of Fashion contains no other article; the Oracle prophesied the death of the Captain, and now exults in its foresight; the Post has given him an epitaph; the Times an elogium; and every one agrees that he made the finest end!"

"Good Heaven! what misfortunes have been the result of one imprudent step!" said Lady Harriet. "My dear, dear Adelaide, how will your sensibility be affected with the dreadful event that has happened: how will your spirit rise against the load of obloquy under which you unjustly suffer."

"Not

"Not so unjustly as you imagine," replied Lady Whirl: "when a young lady don't know her own mind, Harriet; when she acts with duplicity; when she deceives not only her lover, but her protectress, what can she expect?"

"My sister act with duplicity! I protest, Madam, I do not understand you."

"I don't know how you should child, your passion clouds your reason, and will not give your judgment room to exert itself, or you would have seen at once, that your sister, for whom you seem to have all the warmth of an accomplice! nay, start not: strong sensations must be conveyed in strong language; I say, Adelaide has acted with duplicity! Captain O'Glitter was recommended to me by the Irish Baron, Fitzpedigree, who knew every branch and fibre of his family, both lineal and collateral, as a proper husband for my niece. I found him a man elegant in his manners, pleasing in his conversation; and though more of the Mars than the Adonis in his appearance, one of the handsomest figures I had ever seen: charmed with him myself, I introduced him to your sister."

"Without

"Without my father's knowledge, Madam; was that prudent?"

"Hold your tongue, Harriet! I will not be interrupted. What had your father to do in the matter? He would, if I had not gone off with him, have hindered my marriage with Lord Whirl. I, as I said before, took the whole affair upon myself, and introduced the Captain to my lovely *protegee*. What was the consequence? She seemed as much charmed with him as I was, for though I gave them many opportunities, they took many more: at last she consented, every thing was prepared for a northern excursion. I suspected how things were situated, and left town in order to be out of the scrape. Now I come to the duplicity of Adelaide: she, after promising the Captain, persuaded, I verily believe, by you; made another engagement with that walking dictionary, Sir Paul Primitive; appointed to meet him at a certain place, and in the company of a woman, or one who appeared like a woman, took her flight, leaving her hero of the old school to wreak his vengeance upon the deceased, the innocent Captain. No doubt, the fair lady has long

ere this amply rewarded the Knight, who has freed her from the dread of any reproaches but those of her own conscience, no doubt."

"Hold, Madam!" said Lady Harriet, in the utmost emotion, "hold, Lady Whirl, nor breathe another accent that may touch the fame of Adelaide, lest I should be urged by passion to forget the respect which I have ever considered as due to the sister of my father, and accuse her whom I would wish to reverence."

"Reverence, indeed!" said Lady Whirl; "unhand me girl; reverence your grandmother! I hope one not many years older than yourself; one who has been thought to have some attractions, may on that score wave any claim to respect and reverence. Mercy on me, I shall have you on your knees begging a blessing next, I suppose! I wish, my dear, you would learn to curb your passion, and treat me as a friend, for be assured, that is all I require."

"How can I, Madam, consider you as a friend, when you confess yourself the misleader of Adelaide in the first instance, and charge
me

me as an accomplice with her in duplicity in the second? But, I intreat your pardon, perhaps I have been too warm; tremblingly alive to every insinuation against the dear girl, the loved companion of my earliest youth, I have perhaps been too irritable. I ought, from my own knowledge, to have endeavoured to convince you; I ought to have shewn you how much, with respect to the dear fugitive, you had been misinformed and deceived."

"You would child," returned Lady Whirl, "have had a difficult task, and perhaps had better continued, what you have attempted, to brave the storm, in which, considering your years and prudence, or rather prudery, you have succeeded to a miracle; but to shew you the impossibility of reasoning away facts, what answer could you make, suppose I was to ask you where, at this instant, is your sister, where is Sir Paul Primitive?"

"In the great parlour, my Lady," said a servant who was just entering, "he desired to be permitted to have five minutes audience of Lady Harriet."

"Sir

"Sir Paul in the parlour!" said Lady Whirl, "how is that possible? Is Lady Primitive with him?"

"My Lady," said the servant.

"Go and inform the Gentleman," said Lady Harriet, "that I will wait of him;" and then turning to her aunt, she continued, "you see now, Madam, that one of your facts is overturned in an instant; may they not all be built upon as unstable a basis?"

"Impossible," she replied. "This piece of Clock-work is only come to town in his way to the Continent, I am convinced."

"Hear my story," said Lady Harriet; "before you make up your mind upon that subject, I must intrude upon the patience of the Baronet, but the necessity of the occasion must be my excuse." She then related to her the story of Adelaide, in which the meeting with the Countess was connected. Lady Whirl stared when she heard that her pupil had eloped with her mother; and was still more surprised when she read part of that Lady's letter. "All this," said she, when her niece had concluded, "goes toward the exculpation of Adelaide, but will the world be as ready

ready to believe as I am? Will not every one wonder, if there is no truth in them, how such reports could have arisen."

"Perhaps those may, Madam, who do not consider how little regard is to be paid to common fame."

"But then the duel, that is not a fabrication I suppose, nor do you think that the death of the Captain was contrived, as Bays says,"—"for the better carrying on the plot."

"Having reflected but little upon either of these subjects," said Lady Harriet, "I can give no answer; the gentleman in the parlour, can, in all probability, inform us, if you will do me the honour to be present at our interview."

"Do you wish it?" said Lady Whirl, "well, that at least shews that you are above any little paltry concealments; excuse my warmth, dear girl, I was wrong to accuse you!"

"No more of that dear, dear Madam," said Harriet, bursting into tears, "my mind has been of late too much softened, my temper was ever too irritable, your dreadful news threw me off my guard."

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"Certainly

“Certainly the idea of the Captain’s death is a very dreadful one; and I must confess,” returned Lady Whirl, “I have great curiosity to learn how this champion of Adelaide’s has, or means to dispose of himself, therefore dry your eyes my dear. I can assure you, I sincerely pitied the Countess; and if fashion would have permitted it, would have visited her; because I always thought my brother in the wrong: mercy upon me! if separations were to ensue because a lady chose to racket a little, I don’t believe that there would be a couple of condition in the whole Island that would live together a twelve-month.”

As this dialogue had been carried on till the ladies arrived at the parlour door, they entered and were received by Sir Paul, with three profound bows, which were returned by Lady Whirl with three curtsies as profound. Lady Harriet apologised for having detained him, which apology, she said, was the more necessary, as he might be obliged to depart immediately.

“My situation, Madam,” he replied, “is a perfectly happy one while I am waiting the commands of so fair a Lady.”

I. “But

"But the dreadful news that has just reached my ears!"

"What of poor Lord Linger, your neighbour?"—"Ah, he's gone at last! the funeral just left the square as I drove into it: poor man, he was an old friend! had a pretty notion of books, though now a mere dead letter."

"Bless me," said Lady Whirl, "what are you talking of Sir Paul? Who cares whether that skeleton be living or dead; we are anxious about you. When do you take your departure?"

"I take my departure! Madam," said the Baronet, colouring, "I hope not this many years: I have turned over a new leaf, and am the better for it both health and spirits."

"I am happy to hear it, Sir Paul; but do you think it safe to stay?"

"Not long in the presence of two such beautiful ladies; you have already made me forget a lesson I had conned all the way to town."

"Never try to recollect it," said Lady Whirl, "as I have something of more importance

portance to communicate! 'tis plain you have not heard the dreadful news!"

"If you mean concerning public affairs, I cannot say I have heard much good—."

"No, Sir, mine is private, though indeed it is now public enough," continued Lady Whirl.

"Have you heard that Captain O'Glitter is dead?"

"Dead!" said Sir Paul, starting back three paces, "you astonish me!"

"Why so? Is it not the natural consequence of being mortally wounded?"

"Certainly, Lady Whirl, and had that been the case, I should have rather taken measures for my own safety than have stayed here to have expressed my surprise! My astonishment arises from seeing him eat so hearty a breakfast as he did this morning!"

"Have you seen him this morning?" said Lady Harriet, her eyes sparkling with joy.

"I am just come from him, and to be sure if the gentleman is in the situation which Lady Whirl describes, he certainly does great credit to his *undertaker*, for he is the best looking *corpse* I ever beheld."

"Have

"Have I again been deceived?" said Lady Whirl, "sure the people I saw this morning were disposed to play both upon my temper and understanding. Lady Harriet has just convinced me that you have not seen my niece Adelaide, since her flight!"

"I should be sorry," replied the Baronet, "to contradict a young lady whom I so greatly respect, but truth obliges me to state that I saw her yesterday morning, as this letter which I received from her own fair hand, and promised to deliver to Lady Harriet's, will doubtless certify."

"Sure," said Lady Harriet, "we have been all at cross-purposes. Inform us, Sir Paul, what you know, for you only can set the affair in a proper light, when, where, and how you came to see my sister?"

"You have, Madam, divided your question so properly, that I can answer it with all the clearness and perspicuity that the most fastidious queriest could require. I think the mode in which you have placed it may be referred to the third part of *Logic*, which the great Bacon calls the art of *examining*."

"Bless me, Sir Paul, what has logic, or the great Bacon to do with my niece Adelaide?"

“More than you may imagine, Madam: she is a being upon whom a man of scientific turn may be delighted to think and reason; but waving these speculations for the present, I shall proceed to the information you require.”

He then with a circumlocution which tried the patience of the ladies, related what the reader has been before made acquainted with, respecting his journey to Gloucestershire, his interview with the Countess, and a subsequent one with her and Lady Adelaide, in which he urged his suit, but, as it appeared from his own account, without much hope of success; in conclusion he said,—“Finding that the ladies thought my appearance at their house exceedingly anomalous, I took my leave, though the goddess of my adoration did honour me so far as to intrust me with the letter which I delivered to you, Lady Harriet. Business required my presence in town, so I set off post, did not stay the length of a *comma* at Burford, nor of a *semicolon* at Oxford, dinner at Henley may be marked with a *colon*; always have a note of *admiration* when I pass Windsor, and of *interrogation* at the turnpike, respecting the Royal Family; but

“More

did not make a *full-stop* till I arrived at my own door."

"Upon my word," said Lady Whirl, "this journey was truly grammatical, I am sorry it was not attended with more success with respect to the object of it. My niece, Adelaide, is like to prove a crabbed lesson, I fancy you will find it very difficult to get her by *heart*."

"That, Madam, is no discouragement,

"*Radix doctrinae amara fructus dulcis.*"

"as my old friend Lily says."

How long the Baronet, who from the first step, was mounting the high ropes of literature, would have continued, it is impossible to say, if the arrival of the Earl had not put a stop to his harangue, much to the satisfaction of the ladies; and still more to their satisfaction he soon after departed. Lord Belvoir communicated to his sister his intention to set out the next day for Gloucestershire, in order to see Adelaide, but principally to restore the Countess to a situation from which she had long been excluded. It will be needless to state that Lady Whirl, who entertained sentiments of

the Countess, different from those which had formerly influenced her brother, approved of the reconciliation, which will probably be the subject of the next Chapter.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

AFTER a journey, in which they made more commas, semicolons, colons, and periods than the Baronet had done, the Earl and his lovely daughter arrived within sight of the village near which the mansion of the Countess was situated.

Lady Harriet had prudently sent a domestic forward to Adelaide, informing her of their approach; and although her own emotions upon the expected interview were great, they were in some degree repelled by her attempts to repress those that had taken possession of the mind of her father. At length the carriage stopped, they were ushered into the great parlour, and a female servant appearing, the young Lady flew up stairs, and at the same instant threw herself into the arms of her mother and sister.

“Joy to you, Madam!” she said, “joy to my dear, Adelaide! Joy to this happy day

day that reunites the family, that restores to her situation a lady so qualified to adorn it, and gives to us a mother!"

"My lovely! my charming Harriet!" replied the Countess, "harbinger of joy; can I believe that the Earl will overlook a conduct which has caused so long a separation? Can I believe that he is now in the house?"

"The first, Madam, is as certain as the latter; but why droops my dear sister? why does Adelaide avert her tear-stained eyes at a moment when every bosom beats with joy and rapture?"

"Have I not reason?" she replied, "must I not approach my father as a criminal? Can he ever forgive a girl who left his house in consequence of a clandestine engagement? who fled from his protection?"

"That, my dear, I can answer for, has long since been forgiven. The Earl is too generous, even to breath an accent that might seem a reproach.

"I join with you, my dear Harriet, in that opinion," said the Countess, "let us therefore attend him together; methinks I ac-

quire

quire courage from the support of my children."

However a gleam of sunshine might for a moment irradiate the mind of Lady Belvoir, it had vanished before she had got to the door of the parlour. Lady Harriet opened it, with trembling and hesitation, and her mother entered with a daughter on either side. The Earl advanced to meet them, and throwing his arms around the Countess, as she made her obeisance; he said—"I have, madam, already anticipated all that you would wish to say upon this awful occasion, and I am glad that I have done so, as I see your heart is too full to leave your tongue at liberty. You are ready to make submissions for what has long since passed; but first I ought to implore your pardon for my implacability. There are faults which carry their own excuse along with them, and though I will not flatter you so far as to affirm that those which we have both lamented were entirely of that description; such have been your sufferings, and so exemplary, both during our separation and in a late instance, has been your conduct, that I

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have

have wiped every former impression from the tablets of my memory, and assure you that I am happy to embrace once more my adored wife, my lovely, my ever beloved Amelia !”

“ Oh ! my Lord,” said the Countess, bursting into tears, “ what shall I say ; how express my sensibility at an excess of goodness that overpowers me ? Assist me, dear Harriet and Adelaide, to express sentiments, which emotion denies me the power to utter !”

“ Oppressed as I am with joy,” said Lady Harriet, kneeling, “ actions rather than words must convey my feelings ; yet raise me not, my honoured lord and father, till I have thanked Heaven for this happy hour, and prayed that through a long, long period of succeeding years, the bliss of my parents may be daily increasing, that they may live to derive all the comfort and satisfaction from the conduct of Adelaide and myself, which our duty will ever prompt, and their fond hearts could wish.”

“ Though I have far greater occasion to kneel,” said Lady Adelaide, “ I fear a sense
of

of delinquency, and want of the powers and understanding which my sister so eminently possesses, will render my address cold. Yet feeling as I do, the happiness of this moment, permit me, my dear parents, to congratulate you upon it, to pray for its long continuance, and to assure you it never shall again be clouded by the thoughtless, the inconsiderate Adelaide."

"Arise, my children," said the Earl, embracing them, "and while I thank you Harriët, on the part of your mother and myself, for your fervent ejaculation; let me assure you, Adelaide, that any transaction previous to this happy meeting, however you might fear some that have passed might leave a disagreeable impression on my mind, will by me be forgotten, or only remembered as a link of the great chain of causes which have led to this happy event; which have produced a reunion of the family!"

It would be superfluous for us to dwell longer upon a scene, which the sensibility of the parties extended to a considerable length. The Countess, restored to a situation
from

from which she had long been banished, felt the most fervent glow of gratitude to the Almighty, to her husband, and to her daughter Harriet, for the felicity of the present hour; an hour which seemed to her a renewal of all the pleasing prospects which had blessed her youth, meliorated by the consciousness that she had learned, in the school of adversity, to despise what the world falsely called pleasure, and to fix her happiness upon a more substantial basis; that which is to be found in fulfilling the connubial and maternal duties in the friendly circle, and the domestic arrangement.

The Earl, who had for some time wished for the event which had now happened, although he had too much pride to take any steps towards it, or suffer Dr. Lewis to make overtures, which judging of the temper of his Amelia from former circumstances, he feared might prove ineffectual, was not only pleased with the reunion, but the part which his eldest daughter had taken in it; as he discerned in her, not only a rectitude of thinking and acting, but a degree of tenderness and sentiment
which,

which, while it warmed the heart of her parent, promised to insure the future happiness of Lord Edgar.

The lovely Harriet, unconscious of her own merit as of her own beauty, derived her present bliss from the restoration of her mother to the family, from the joy of her father, and from the company of her dear Adelaide, whose mind she soothed with the utmost tenderness, and the perturbations of whose bosom she exerted her utmost endeavours to calm; nor were her endeavours unattended with success. In a few days, that young Lady could listen with composure to the interesting account she gave of the developement of her amour; nay, she even heard of the *fairy Minionet*, without attempting to aim one shaft of ridicule at the introduction of a supernatural being; she only mildly said—"As I have travelled but little in the regions of romance, and know still less of the mysteries of the cabala, I can neither concur with, nor confute the opinion of some, that an intermediate race of beings preside over and watch the actions of mortals, though I am well aware that a moral and
even

even a religious use might in modern, as it was in ancient times, be made of fables of this description. But at the same time, I think that supernatural agents should never be introduced to perform what might be done without them. *A-propos*, my dear Harriet, might not your *fairy Minionet*, your old woman with her crutch, be an illusion of your mind, engendered from the marvellous books you were reading; and might not her discoveries and admonitions arise from the busy whispers about me, which you own Lord Edgar informed you were in circulation, together with his observations and your nocturnal reflections, upon the Captain and myself?"

"But the visits of the fairy were in the morning, Adelaide!"

"True! But have you not heard that the morning dreams of virgins are *sometimes* romantic?"

"Let them be so, my dear Adelaide, I shall dread you as an opponent if I attempt to argue the point with you, therefore I will wave it. Whether they were the morning dreams of a virgin, the admonitions of a fairy,

fairy, or the whispers of a lover, I am happy that their issue has been beneficial to you."

"So am I!" said Lady Adelaide; "escaped from the snare that was laid for me, I don't believe that even the dread of marrying Sir Paul, would frighten me into it again."

"I hope not," said Lady Harriet, smiling; "as much worse events might happen than marrying the Baronet."

"I know, my dear sister, he was always a favorite of your's."

"If I have formerly said a word or two in his favour, it was from my fears for you, not any particular *penchant* for him, I assure you. My dear Adelaide, the possessor of youth, beauty, rank, and fortune will, I doubt not, shortly, not only adorn an elevated station, but what is better, insure the happiness of some noble youth, whose sense, talents, spirit, and accomplishments, may prompt him to the arduous task of endeavouring to deserve her."

"Bless you, my dear Harriet!" said Adelaide, embracing her, "you're ten times better than any fairy that ever I read of."

"Let

"Let me be fairy, prophetess, or whatever you please, so that I have the means of using my poor exertions to promote the happiness of my Adelaide," said Lady Harriet, "and my bliss will be complete. We must not, my dear sister, expect that the ebullition which our little affairs have raised in the minds of officious friends, will instantly subside; you must not wonder if the busy whispers of the fashionable world are, through some channel or other, communicated to you; nor, must you wonder that their animadversions upon your conduct are severe, and even unjust. It is the fate of beauty and talents to excite envy; and, if the possessor has more vivacity than prudence, to afford gratification to malignity. At the same time rest assured, that their busy whispers will die away, envy will be repressed, and malignity disappointed, if these foibles and passions do not receive support from our own actions. The town may be compared to the ordeal of Queen Emma, and the woman who has passed safely, though metaphorically, over the burning ploughshares, will certainly, by her prudence and rectitude of conduct, by

her

her resistance of temptation and repression of passion, live so, both with respect to the world, and to herself; that she may never again be in danger of incurring the like penalty."

After residing a few days in Gloucestershire, the Earl and Countess of Belvoir, with their two daughters, set out for the family mansion, which the reader has been informed, was in Somersetshire. Dr. Lewis, through whose medium the news of the reconciliation had been communicated to the neighbourhood, accompanied by Lord Edgar, the surrounding gentry, and a large concourse of tenants and dependants, met the carriage of the Earl as soon as it entered the park, where, after they had made their congratulations, they attended it to the mansion.

For several days the village of Belvoir was a scene of hilarity, and when the rejoicings upon the return of the Countess, in some degree subsided, the marriage of Lord Edgar and Lady Harriet, caused them to be renewed. But the hilarity and joy of the inhabitants of Belvoir had a more substantial foundation than that of a transient festival.

They

They saw a family, whom the opulent respected as the ornament of the country, and the poor regarded as their benefactors, return to reside entirely among them; for such his Lordship declared to be his intention. They saw that his eldest daughter had formed a connexion with the representative of a noble family in the vicinity. They felt the present, and anticipated the future effects, of a liberality which had extended far and near, and was branching out in streams which nurtured infancy, comforted age, relieved sickness, conveyed instruction, encouraged industry, and revived the whole county. These blessings they derived from the families of Belvoir and Edgar, who were the constant theme of the prayers of the peasantry and poor; nor were their prayers unavailing. The Earl and Countess continue, to the present period, patterns of a conjugal felicity, which is scarcely surpassed by that of Lord and Lady Edgar; nor is the once gay Adelaide less fortunate in the matrimonial lottery, being, as her sister had prognosticated, solicited by a noble youth whose suit was approved by the Earl and Countess,

Countess, and after a little circumvolution by the young Lady, who, entirely reformed from her former habits, feeling not the least propensity to dissipation, but thoroughly domesticated, frequently blesses the contrivance of her sister Harriet, and the happy hour when she eloped with her mother, instead of Captain O'Glitter.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.